THE PREACHING OF JESUS

G. L. Richardson.

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THE PREACHING OF JESUS

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THE PREACHING OF JESUS

A Study of some Sermons of the Master

BY

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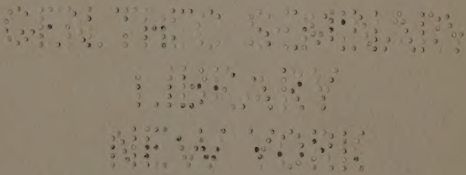

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INTRODUCTION

OF books on preaching the reader—especially if he be a reviewer—will think there are enough and to spare. To add another to the list would seem to imply on the part of the writer great gifts—or great presumption. But my purpose in the pages which follow is not to write as a preacher to preachers; still less to hazard my own views as to the composition of sermons. What I have aimed at is simpler and perhaps less usual. I ask those who read, whether priests or laymen, to study with me some of the recorded sermons of our Lord Himself; that together we may learn and apply the method which He followed in dealing with all sorts and conditions of men, and may thereby gain afresh something of His Spirit.

I

Such a study I have long thought might be useful to my brethren in "the ministry of the Word" who, like S. Paul, are conscious that

they "have not yet attained, neither are already perfect"—and who therefore preserve the habit of the student amid the whirl of parochial activity.

It may also be helpful to Theological students and lay readers (whose duty it is or may be "to preach, if they be thereto licensed by the Bishop himself") to consider from this point of view the preaching of Jesus.

II

This then is not primarily a book of counsel and advice to preachers. Whether the sermon should be spoken or read, long or short (though a good sermon should *seem* short), does not now concern us. These, and more important questions, have been handled by masters of the art such as Bishop Phillips Brooks in America, Dr. James Stalker in Scotland, Bishop Carey and Fr. Bull in England, and—*facile princeps*—Bishop Dupanloup in France.

Neither is this a book *about* preaching; its alleged decline and fall from the sublime to the commonplace. The power of the pulpit may have waned as the power of the Press has increased; the preacher may not always (or often) be, as formerly, intellectually ahead of his congregation. We have not to-day a

Donne, a Jeremy Taylor, or a Robertson—nor have the people the concentration and steadfastness of mind which would welcome and thereby secure such preaching.

Yet we who are called to the "ministry of the Word" no less than of the Sacraments, are called *here* and *to-day*, at such a time and in such circumstances as God in His wisdom has chosen for us. Every man must "work out his own salvation"—in preaching as in act—"in fear and trembling"; believing that "it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do, of His good pleasure."

The Holy Spirit is promised to the surrendered heart and will; and to these is given "in that hour" what to say and speak: but He does not inspire the careless; hard mental toil and spiritual application are needed to make the preacher an instrument on whose chords the Divine Power may breathe. (Think of Joseph Butler's *Sermons on Human Nature*, compact of close-knit wisdom, or study the arrangement of thought and emotional appeal in Bourdaloue's Holy Week addresses.)

III

I may call the chapters which follow "a study in method." I ask you to take one by

one some characteristics of the Master as revealed in His preaching and to see Him at work converting, instructing, convicting, exhorting, catechizing, justifying the ways of God to men.

In each study I take one distinguishing mark of preaching as exemplified in "the preaching of Jesus" and consider it. Then follows an examination of a sermon recorded in the Gospels from the point of view of *method*: (an inquiry which the Master will not deem presumptuous in a student of His Word). Next comes an application of the method to the work of preaching to-day. Fourthly some questions are put for the student to consider as a meditation: and each study closes with a prayer.

If the plan is found helpful, the reader may pursue it for himself by making further studies and improving upon my attempt.

IV

It is through personality that God reveals Himself to men. An inspired personality, "full of the Holy Ghost," is a channel through which God can work freely. And this is not the suppression of character, but its highest term. All preaching reveals the character of

the preacher. Men are so constituted that to one the Righteousness, to another the Beauty, to a third the Holiness of the Divine Nature makes the supreme appeal. This will affect the colour of the message ; it will be predominantly intellectual, or devotional, or ethical.

In the preaching of Jesus a perfect character is revealed. "Never man spake like this Man." A disciple crystallizes the common conviction of those who knew Him : "We beheld His glory, as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." And another added that He is "the effulgence of the Divine glory and the expression of the Infinite Personality." He left no notes : but in the Evangel the perfect character lies open to devout study, in word as in act.

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THE PREACHING OF JESUS

STUDY I

THE COURAGE OF CONVICTION

I. Courage

COURAGE, or fortitude, has always been reckoned among the four cardinal virtues. In modern Psychology it is awarded a place anterior to Justice, Prudence, or Temperance: for these are derived or secondary qualities, whereas Courage (like its antithesis Fear) is a primary emotion. Just as there is an instinct of Flight and an emotion of Fear, so there is an instinct of Combativeness and an emotion of Courage. I place it first in these Studies because it is not always recognized that moral courage—which is prepared to take risks and do battle—is an essential part of the character of a true preacher. The man who stands for twenty minutes "above contradiction" will be neither rash nor timid—over dogmatic nor apologetic—if he has the courage of conviction.

Courage is an ill word to define, but a quality easy to recognize. Popularly, and also etymologically, it is associated with the heart as the seat of emotion. "Faint heart never won fair lady," but *cœur-de-lion* wins victories in many fields. *Great-heart* is the name of Bunyan's hero. W. J. Locke has described courage in *The Rough Road*, and G. K. Chesterton declares that it means "a strong desire to live taking the form of a readiness to die": a parodox which is resolved in action by the soldier, the sailor, and the mountaineer who "desire life like water and yet drink death like wine." More prosaically we might say that courage is the reaction of a healthy organism to circumstances of danger or difficulty. What paralyses the timid exhilarates the brave.

To those who have lived through the Great War the classical definition of courage given by Aristotle in *The Ethics*—as a middle term or "mean" between Rashness and Fear—is far removed from our experience. The ancient philosopher blames those soldiers who threw away their lives rather than surrender, and commends those who yield when confronted by a superior force. This does not describe the European type of courage of recent years: the reckless daring displayed at Zeebrugge or on the Somme or at Suvla Bay would have scandalized the Greek hoplite and confounded the Roman legionary. A readiness to take risks against overwhelming odds is almost our

definition of courage. It is the way of the noble army of martyrs and the glorious company of the Apostles.

The War of Nations also taught us that even great courage is not so exceptional as we should have thought. It proved to be not the lonely virtue of "the unconquerable soul" but the endowment of the many. Masses of men and women who had never faced serious danger were tried in the ordeal by fire and were not found wanting. One who himself found life in losing it has left it on record—"They died gloriously, with a smile for the pain and dread of it. One by one death challenged them. One by one they smiled in his grim visage, and refused to be dismayed."

Moral Courage.

The virtue described by *A Student in Arms* is so splendid that it seems almost churlish to assert that moral courage stands on a higher plane. Yet for most men it is harder to face "the spectres of the mind" than a foe of flesh and blood: men fear contempt or ridicule more than wounds and death. The reason doubtless is that in facing physical danger the "group consciousness" is enlisted on the side of courage; it is reinforced by the felt obligation to be worthy of the traditions of family or regiment or country. A man about to desert his post has been recalled by the exhorta-

tion, "The eyes of England are upon you." Moral courage is usually shown in *resisting* accepted standards and conventions and usages. "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me"—such is Christ's enunciation of the Law. And such courage—the courage of conviction—is cool courage which is not assisted by the approbation of spectators visible or invisible (at least in the tribal sense); nor is it warmed by the heat and ardour of conflict.

But there is no need to emphasize the difference between the two kinds of courage, or to exalt either at the expense of the other. The truth is that frequently they are found together. The little minister of Barrie's story showed equal courage among the foaming waters of the "spate," and in facing the prejudices of his congregation—and who shall say which was the greater? Physical prowess and courage are *in themselves* admirable; and form the best foundation for moral courage. Thomas Carlyle in England and Frederick Nietzsche in Germany obscured this truth by the glorification of the strong man and the superman; and Charles Kingsley's "muscular Christianity" is inadequate to our modern needs. The reaction has now gone so far that some recent writers seem inclined to apologize for acts of courage in our Lord Himself. But a man who on due occasion *cannot* be combative and pugnacious lacks virility; he is eccentric and

abnormal. We shall do well to remember that the marks of physical courage—the untroubled breathing, the steady heart-beat, the unflinching nerve—are outward and visible signs of that moral courage which, once attained, may persist in spite of bodily weakness.

Christ's Courage.

Those who wrote down the record of the Perfect Life reveal the impression which they received. They do not praise or criticize, for He is above both criticism and eulogy: a fact which modern writers would do well to remember. But His steadfast and unflinching courage overawed them: "as they followed they were afraid."

It is possible for readers of the Gospels to miss the vivid impression of the moral and physical courage of our Lord—because He is our Lord. We think of Him as always having at His back the resources of Divine Power, and forget that Power is not Force. It is the principle of the Incarnation that He could not use the divine omnipotence in His human interest. He could not "ask the Father for the twelve legions of angels"—for "it behoved the Christ to suffer": "the Scripture must be fulfilled." When we see this, His courage shines out.

When surrounded by a hostile crowd at Nazareth He "passed through the midst of

them and went His way." We seem to see them give way before Him. So again when He confronted His enemies at Gethsemane they "went backward" so hastily that they stumbled "and fell to the ground." In a storm at sea He was able to sleep. When awakened, He infused His own courage into His trembling companions: "It is God's world; the sea is His; who 's afraid?"

When His road lay through a deserted burial ground, where no one dared to "pass by that way" because a dangerous madman was known to be at large, He did not choose a safer path. When the powerful lunatic met Him, He asked him a question which any human being might ask another—"What is your name?" He addressed him as a *person*, and restored unity to the distracted personality. He did not shrink, as all men shrank until He came, from touching a leper: He feared no contagion.

The dread that had haunted man from the beginning had no terrors for Him: He *saw through* death, and declared that there is nothing in it. To tremble at it was to be like a child afraid of the dark: with the Father at hand there is nothing to fear. Before His public ministry began He tested His power to subdue fear and to endure hardship. He knew what hunger and thirst are; He had experience of the torrid heat of desert rocks and the bitter cold of nights in the open. The impression grows

upon the reader that health and strength, matured in humble and hardy circumstances and by manual labour, were the physical basis of His courage.

II. THE SERMON AT NAZARETH

The student will read carefully S. Luke iv. 16–30; compare S. Matthew xiii. 54–57, and S. Mark vi. 1–4; also Isaiah xli. 1, 2.

1. Note our Lord's choice of a text. He had a message to deliver which was vital to the Gospel of the Kingdom. It was bound to provoke opposition and to arouse even fierce hostility. It needed courage to enunciate. But it was necessary for the effectiveness of the message that He should gain a hearing and ensure if possible a receptive frame of mind for comprehending it. Therefore He chooses a text which is well known to His congregation and which makes a strong appeal to their best emotions; a text which also comes to them with the prestige of the authority of the greatest of the prophets:

> The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
> Because He anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor:
> He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives,
> And recovering of sight to the blind,
> To set at liberty them that are bruised,
> To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.
> (*Isa.* lxi. 1, 2).

2. He does not "give out" the text as a

thesis which He will expound and illustrate : He pours Himself into it, He identifies Himself with it : "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." No wonder "the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on Him." Their attention is gained, their interest aroused ; they cannot take their eyes off Him. The old words are alive with new meaning ; they are no longer Isaiah's but *His* ; He carries His hearers with Him in the conviction that the acceptable year is *here*, the acceptable time *now*.

We may note how He leads them from attention to interest and from interest to wonder—"they wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His lips." In the atmosphere of wonder new horizons open ; the hearers are in the mood to make a moral decision. Their reason is convinced, their hearts touched ; but is the *will* surrendered ? Are they prepared to go all the way with Him ? Do they welcome the message and *all that it implies* ?

3. Here is manifested the courage of the true preacher. Will he dare to press home the possibly unwelcome truth ? How tempting and how justifiable to stop with the good impression he has made ! But He sweeps such suggestions aside : He shows once and for all the courage of conviction. Necessity is laid upon Him ; He cannot but speak what He has heard and seen ; whatsoever the

Father doeth, the Son doeth likewise—whether they will hear or whether they will forbear. Liberty, release, recovery : this is what they want : this is good news. But they want it for themselves and they want to keep it to themselves. If everybody is to share it, how will they be better off than others ? Yet this is what He is saying : the acceptable year of the Lord is for *all* who are poor and sorrowful and heavy-laden ; it is not the national, tribal, Jewish gospel of their dreams.

Can we not see, as our Lord unfolds His gospel, how doubt, surprise, incredulity, indignation succeed one another on the faces of His hearers ? What right has He to speak thus ? Who is He, after all ? They know Him and His people from His boyhood ! If He dares to speak with authority, let Him do *here* some of those wonderful things which have given Him a reputation elsewhere !

Jesus anticipates the unspoken challenge. " You will surely say to Me the proverb—' Physician heal thyself.' " A wonder-worker should work wonders at home. " But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the time of Elijah, but unto none of them was he sent, but unto Sarepta, a city of *Sidon*."

The congregation is restive at the mention of Sidon : does the God of Israel care for Sidon ? But they cannot deny their own scriptures ; and He clinches the argument by the reference to " the many lepers in Israel

in the time of Elisha" and the healing of Naaman the *Syrian*—who came from that dangerous Damascus.

His first sermon is preached. Addressing that most difficult audience His own kinsfolk and acquaintance, He has proved His courage. God's purpose is not as they suppose for the "elect" but for mankind: the Gospel is for Jerusalem and Judaea and Samaria and the utmost part of the earth. It is true and they know it in their hearts: the seed sown is destined to bear fruit in many a missionary enterprise.

But prejudice and passion are strong: the synagogue "is filled with wrath": they thrust Him out of the city and threaten to cast Him down headlong from the brow of the hill. But the intrepid courage, which overawed His assailants on a later day in Gethsemane, carries Him unhurt through the crisis: "He passing through the midst of them went His way."

III. APPLICATION

1. S. Augustine says that the Christian preacher, "when he exhorts his hearers, with a view to action, should persuade, delight, convince." When duty requires you to preach an unwelcome truth, do not throw it at the head of your people: introduce it with sympathy and tact, always remembering that

Christian tact means *getting into touch* with your hearers.

2. Show that the truth you preach flows from a common principle accepted by speaker and hearer.

3. When you get to it, don't shirk it. "Be ready," as Luther says, "to stake body and soul, goods and reputation, on its truth." Have the courage of your conviction.

4. Take the consequences. If it does not commend itself as "the gospel of the day" it may prove (as in our Lord's sermon) the gospel of the future.

IV. QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Henry Scott Holland used to describe faith as "a venture of the soul." Is adventure, chivalry, readiness to take risks characteristic of the Church and of Christian society to-day? Is the lack of this spirit of adventure a cause of failure, especially in its appeal to the young?

2. Is the heroic and ascetic side of Christianity—abundantly illustrated in the mission field—set before our youth as an ideal worth striving for?

3. When does "tact" degenerate into opportunism? Conversely; when do mere obstinacy and self-will cloak themselves under the garb of courage and conviction?

4. "Adventure" sounds attractive because

youth is sanguine of winning through. But it would lose its thrill if there were not the risk of failure. If you fail, have you faith enough to see in failure "a triumph's evidence for the fullness of the days"? And are the "failures" higher in heaven's list than the successful?

V. PRAYER

TEACH us, good Lord, to serve Thee as Thou deservest: to give and not to count the cost: to fight and not to heed the wounds: to toil and not to seek for rest: to labour and not to ask for any reward save that of knowing that we do Thy will. Amen.

STUDY II

THE APPEAL TO CONSCIENCE

I. Conscience

THE best of teachers must say at times "Do what I say, not what I do." The best of preachers does not always and consistently practise what he preaches. Those who try hardest know best that they fall short of their ideal. *Humanum est errare* is a true proverb.

Christ's teaching and example are uniformly consistent : of a piece : like His coat without seam, woven from the top throughout. I could imagine an intimate disciple—S. John for instance—writing the greater part of the Sermon on the Mount from close observation of the habits of the Master ; so closely does the sermon fit the character. Abstract and concrete, theory and practice, are one : *Verbum caro factum.*

The appeal to conscience is felt to be essential to true preaching ; yet thoughtful observers say that it is comparatively rare in modern times. The reason probably is that though we are not better than our fathers, we are more complex. To people who discuss, rather

than assume, the reality of sin, grace, redemption, the old form of appeal fails to come home. The preacher is aware of a change, but has not adapted himself to the new conditions. Christian ethics and Christian psychology must for the future form part of ministerial training, no less than Christian doctrine. It is worth while for the theological student to put to himself such questions as these : What exactly is conscience ? Whence and how does it derive the authority which it undoubtedly claims ? Is it the voice of God, and in what sense ? Is it infallible, and if not how can it be educated to become a sure guide ? What is, so to speak, its natural history and origin ? Granted that the old psychology was wrong in accounting it a separate faculty, what is its true place in human personality ? Is it an emotion or an act of moral judgement ? If the latter, can there be moral judgement unaccompanied by emotion ? Or is conscience simply a habit derived from custom—" the custom of the tribe "—as some anthropologists assert ? How are we to account for the fact that its deliverances as to what is right and what is wrong differ so widely among different races in different ages ?

Such questions it is easier to ask than to answer. Their discussion is more suitable to the lecture room than the pulpit. But the intelligent hearer will know intuitively whether the conclusions proclaimed on Sunday are the

result of labour in the study. The result of my own work on this subject has been to assure me (1) that every human being who has the use of his reason knows that there is a difference between *right* and *wrong*. This difference is as plain to normal people as the difference between light and darkness. It cannot be doubted. Conscience therefore, in the sense of an awareness or consciousness of right and wrong, exists at least in a rudimentary form in every rational being. (2) Conscience implies a standard of conduct to which the individual feels bound to conform, whether he actually conforms to it or not. It carries with it the sense of obligation or duty—the sense of "I ought." (3) But the sentiment of duty or obligation is only experienced with regard to persons, and only applies to them to a limited extent. Hence C. J. Webb has recently revived Martineau's famous argument that the fact of conscience ultimately demands and implies the supreme Personality in whom alone it finds complete satisfaction. And Dean Inge adds "The only hypothesis which explains the facts is that in Conscience we feel the motions of the Universal Reason which strives to convert the human organism into an organ of Itself." This spirit which strives with man can be nothing less than a Personal God. (4) Viewed from its human side we may describe conscience, as it shows itself in history, thus: conscience is the reaction or response of a

human being when confronted with an ideal of conduct or standard of action. If the standard is low, the moral response will be feeble ; if the standard rises, conscience will function with increasing effect on character. Every organism which is alive responds to stimulus : the ideal or standard is what arouses and stimulates the conscience.

Starting from these considerations, can we bring together the divine and human elements in conscience ? What is the connection between conscience regarded as a Divine Voice and conscience considered as a matter of observation ?

Generally speaking an Ideal is inoperative because it is too fluid, too vague : its outlines are too shadowy for our imitation. On the other hand a Rule or Standard is too rigid and too abstract : it may repel or discourage us rather than inspire effort, as S. Paul found in the case of the Law. What is needed is for the Ideal and the Standard to be *personalized* : for, as Professor Baldwin has pointed out, we are so constituted as to respond to suggestions of personality from earliest infancy.

Along the lines above indicated the serious student may attempt to work out from the Christian point of view a modern psychological analysis of conscience. It is a fascinating study which the present writer has elsewhere attempted : for in a Christian view of conscience there must be the meeting-place of

Christian Ethics, Psychology, and Moral Theology.

The fact which has called into being the distinctively *Christian* conscience is "the Fact of Christ." In Him the ideal or standard has been *personalized* and manifested in human history. And in this fact there is made possible the *education* of conscience.

An ideal is essential to moral progress, and it can hardly be denied that in Christ we have an ideal for human conduct. Those who, like Nietzsche and his followers, hold that the Christian conscience is nothing but "a pathological condition," an example of "cruelty turned inward," necessarily are driven to deny the authority of conscience, and to exalt the "will to power" above the Moral Law. But experiments in this direction have not been encouraging: and as a matter of fact the men and women who have dared to obey the voice of conscience when all the world was against them are precisely those who cannot be classed as "neurasthenic" or "hysterical."

This section of our study may fitly close with a brief statement of the steps in the education of the Christian conscience.

(1) First the disciple becomes aware of an ideal which is not merely a "mental concept" but a fact—the Fact of Christ. In the light of this fact he becomes ashamed of the standards which hitherto have satisfied him.

(2) Then as we feel this new attraction, there

follows an outflow of emotion in the direction of this ideal.

(3) Lastly a purposive movement of the will sets strongly towards the attainment of the Christian standard.

Christ Himself always assumed the fact of conscience in man. "The light of the body is the eye . . . If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness." "Why judge ye not your own selves that which is right?" Therefore the preaching of Jesus was popular in the best and truest sense. "He truly addressed Himself," says Bishop Dupanloup, "to the people, that is to say to each and all: He overlooked no one. He explained the highest truths, but in language the most clear, simple, and intelligible and at the same time the most noble, vivid, and penetrating. He spoke to them of things which interested them, borrowed from their most familiar occupations, and from thence raised them step by step up to the sublimest mysteries, which under that popular form made the foundation of the preaching of the Gospels, as they ought to be of the teaching of the Priesthood." In a word, He spoke to the heart and conscience.

II. THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Read carefully S. Matthew, chapters v–vii.

1. "He opened His mouth and taught them, saying, Blessed . . ." He knew how men

inevitably seek for happiness. It is, in Aristotle's phrase, "the good at which all things aim." It is the universal desire, but impossible to attain—so men thought—except by the privileged few. Our Lord says that something better than happiness is possible for all if they choose to have it. Eight times He dwells upon the word blessed—a word dear and familiar to the ears of His hearers. As they listen, phrases from Deuteronomy and the Psalms would be remembered: "Ye are the blessed of the Lord Who hath made heaven and earth," "Blessed shalt thou be in the city and blessed shalt thou be in the field: blessed shall be thy basket and thy store." But Israel is a vanquished race: the Roman is in possession: the city is governed by strangers, the field pays tax and toll to the heathen. What does He mean? What kind of blessing can be theirs?

He draws for them a picture of the blessedness of character: He outlines an ideal which attracts and which their conscience welcomes and approves. He pours His benediction upon the poor, the humble, the meek, the persecuted, the sorrowful; upon the merciful, the peaceable, the single-hearted; those who hunger and thirst for the coming of the kingdom of God.

2. The ideal, which we recognize as the portrait of Christ Himself, floats in all its attractiveness before His hearers. Yet it is,

so to speak, in the air. To make it work in their conscience He must link it up with their own convictions and religious experience : He must establish a point of contact and meet their souls at the level where they are. He divines their unspoken thought : " This new teaching is strange and attractive and beautiful : but is it true ? What would Moses and ' those who sit in Moses' seat ' think of it ? "

He appeals to the Scriptures themselves. He assures them that their fears are groundless. As clear as the sky overhead, as firm as the ground under their feet, stands the moral law : He will not take from it so much as the dotting of an *i* or the crossing of a *t*. The Commandments stand—and they stand for far more than the Jews suppose. If " man looks on the outward appearance, the Lord looketh on the heart." Samuel and David knew that : the motive counts as well as the overt act. What are the *roots* of murder, adultery, divorce, retaliation, cruelty ? The Law is not abolished, but He will give them a law which develops and transcends the old. " You have learned to love some people—your friends : now learn to love all, whether friends or foes. You have learned to forgive some injuries : then set no limits to forgiveness, for this is godlike."

3. The temper and character which conscience approves are next shown at work in details. Our Lord is never satisfied with proclaiming great principles : they must be

worked out in concrete instances and applied in particulars. Three recognized religious duties are selected for illustration — prayer, fasting, almsgiving. He shows how they are to be practised in the light of the new principle He has set before them. He puts Himself alongside of His hearers, comes down to their level in His human sympathy : touches on common and familiar things. He talks of food and clothing : the pot of money which a lucky ploughman may some day turn up in his field : sowing and reaping : wild birds and wild flowers : the servant who toils for a master : the woman weaving at the loom. By many a homely and humorous example He commends His teaching, and manifests the gay spirit, the lightness of heart, which can rise above the care and worry of the common lot. "This liberty is theirs : God means them to have it : for His love is universal like the sunshine and the rain."

4. Thus He reaches His final appeal to their religious consciousness. To "win through" to this freedom of the spirit will be a stern fight, an uphill adventure. "The gate is narrow, the path steep." To acclaim Him leader and master is not enough : they must *follow*. The character that will stand the final ordeal must be built not on emotion but on principle, not on sand but on rock.

[NOTE.—The student may be reminded that the purpose of these Studies is practical and devotional rather than critical

or homiletical. We are taking the Gospel of S. Matthew as it stands. It may well be, as Professor Burkitt and other scholars think, that its form is shaped by the hand of a disciple guided by the Spirit—Who is "the Spirit of Jesus." S. Luke's narrative may be the more historical, viewed in relation to words as uttered. If this be so, we have here rather a course of sermons than an allocution delivered on one occasion. In that case the harmony and sequence of thought are the more remarkable, and we may be thankful that the Sermon has come down to us not in parts but as an organic whole.]

III. APPLICATION

1. The preacher should set an ideal before his people. "We needs must love the highest *when we see it.*" That is the task of the preacher—to quicken the imagination to *see* the King in His beauty. We must lift people up to our level, not accommodate ourselves to theirs. Our Lord did this—and the pastor must imitate the Pastor Pastorum. To attain this, without arrogance and without hypocrisy, we must be penitents as well as priests; we must humbly rely on the aid of the Holy Spirit and the grace of our Ordination. If the preacher sees no visions and dreams no dreams, "the hungry sheep look up and are not fed." Many an ardent soul, hungering and thirsting for he knows not what, is repelled by the gospel of the commonplace—by the want of imagination in one who should be a "seer." Conscience cannot vibrate to a low note.

2. Do not exhort, or emphasize the moral, overmuch : this defeats the end you have in view, by calling into play the " law of reversed effort." The desired course of action should be *suggested* by the homeliest and most lively illustrations you can draw from your daily experience among your people. Here lies, for preaching purposes, the great value of regular pastoral visiting, which is too much neglected. Our Lord was familiar with the home life of the people, and He used this method of " suggestion." Suggestibility is one of the key words of psychology : children respond readily to suggestion and crowds equally so. Let your people think *with you* and let them have the pleasure of discovering the moral for themselves.

3. If you would awaken conscience, you must *instruct* the conscience. People respond more readily to-day to instruction than to emotional appeal. The " still small voice " often sets going a train of action, when fire and thunder only " pass by."

4. We need to educate the Christian conscience up to the standard which Christ sets before His people. And the character of Christ is itself the standard to which we are bidden to conform. It is therefore fixed, and yet is always beyond us.

5. Our Lord did not shrink from speaking plainly on matters which should stir the sluggish conscience—on marriage and divorce;

on prayer and fasting and almsgiving ; on the social aspects of the religious life ; on the love of enemies and the duty of forgiveness. Never was it more necessary for the preacher to think clearly and speak plainly on moral and social questions than it is to-day.

IV. QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Are the clergy fit persons to be the " keepers of the people's conscience " ? Are our motives pure enough, our manner of life unworldly enough to commend our message to men's consciences in the sight of God ?

2. How often are we consulted in cases of moral doubt or difficulty or failure or perplexity ?

3. Do we try to fit ourselves to give wise guidance by the study of moral theology ?

4. Is there a national conscience, a public conscience, a social conscience ? How does it differ from " public opinion " ? Is an *international* conscience a possibility in the sphere of practical politics ?

5. What is the right relation between morality and religion ? And how far does theology influence conduct ?

V. PRAYER

ALMIGHTY God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets

are hid ; Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy holy Name ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

STUDY III

DOCTRINAL PREACHING

I. Doctrine

DOCTRINE is, as it were, the nerve of preaching. The sermon should appeal to the heart and conscience, but the appeal is, or should be, based upon Christian doctrine. The great preachers, from S. Paul onwards, have drawn their inspiration from the Incarnation, the Atoning Death, the Resurrection, and the sacramental doctrine which these facts imply. "Apply thyself," says S. Paul to Timothy, "to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine." And again, "Give heed to thyself and to the doctrine: continue in them: for in so doing thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." It is very evident that what gives weight and substance to preaching is Doctrine. The art of rhetoric, the charm of eloquence, are auxiliary advantages, not essentials. But the preacher who does not preach doctrine does not, to speak plainly, exercise the Ministry of the Word.

S. Augustine puts doctrine, or instruction, in the forefront of the preacher's office. "The preacher, when he persuades his hearers to

action, should not only *teach*, to instruct them, and *delight*, to hold their attention, but also *stir their hearts*, to convince them." Doctrine, teaching, instruction, is put first in logical order and also in order of importance ; the rest hangs upon it.

And with this agree the words of Luther. "The preacher should be able to *teach* plainly and in order ; should have a good head ; good power of memory, voice, and language ; should know when to stop ; should be sure of what he means to say, and be ready to stake body and soul, goods and reputation on its truth."

The authors of the Report published in 1918 on *The Teaching Office of the Church* gave a clear call to preachers to give heed to Doctrine. "There has been a tendency in the Church to neglect intellectual interests. Too many of the clergy neglect study. They exhort people to 'come to Communion' but they seldom give clear and satisfying teaching on the scope and doctrine of the sacrament. Sermons are often without real substance, deficient in intellectual quality, and unable to arouse interest and response."

This is a severe indictment : but who shall say that it is not deserved ? Of course the blame is not all on one side : there are poor hearers as well as poor preachers. If the fault on the side of the pulpit is lack of study, there is on the side of the pew a revolt from dogmatic teaching and from all that implies

authoritative utterance which is very characteristic of our times. The remedy is not to shirk doctrine, but to make the doctrine *convincing*. It is remarkable how people will crowd to hear a lecturer on Art or Science or even Economics who has the prestige of being "an authority" on his subject. They could read it all in books or newspapers, but they prefer to hear it at first hand—and will pay to do so. Why should not "the minister of the Word" after ten years of study be recognized as an authority in his own field of work—at least in his own town or district? This is not commonly attained, but is surely attainable by men who take their preaching seriously. If "the priest's lips keep knowledge," if he is the "messenger of the Lord of Hosts," the people also should "seek the law at his mouth." People get, on the whole, what they deserve: the law of supply and demand applies even to sermons. The good preacher is numbed when he faces empty benches. If good preaching helps to fill them, it is also true that a good congregation helps to make a good preacher. It stimulates him to study.

And not the least important among his studies should be the study of the art of teaching. There is no valid reason why "dogmatic teaching" or "doctrinal theology" should connote in the popular mind what is dry and indigestible or what is antiquated and unintelligible. Doctrine appeals to the intellectual

side of man's spiritual nature, and has an answer to give on the momentous problems of our life and destiny. If convincingly stated it should be more than interesting ; it should be absorbing ; satisfying the desire to *know*. This is indeed "eternal life, to know the true God and the Christ whom He has sent." Curiosity and wonder, as psychologists assert, are precursors of the search for truth. And a "dogma"—leaving aside the popular misconceptions of its meaning—is simply a popular statement of a truth : it is a religious truth put in such a form as can easily be learnt and remembered. Those who wish to learn come for facts, not arguments. A dogma is not an argument but the plain statement of a fact of religion. Similarly "doctrine," which is part of Dogmatic Theology, is *teaching*, not evidences or apologetics. These have an important function ; but doctrine is one thing and evidence is another.

There may be inadequate doctrine and perverted dogma : but where doctrinal preaching has the collective experience of the Christian centuries behind it, and the living experience of the preacher in it, it will not fail to accomplish its purpose, which is to ground and build up young and old disciples in the school of Christ.

Christian doctrine has for its subject-matter (1) the nature of God, i.e. His character, and (2) His dealings with men. It assumes that

in the religious experience more is involved than mental states and emotions originating in human or sub-human consciousness. It postulates an *object* of thought as well as a subject. It maintains, in common with all religions and most philosophies, that there is some power not ourselves which shapes the destiny of men and nations. It refuses to admit that this power is unconscious, impersonal, or non-moral. On the contrary this eternal Fount of Being is held to have *revealed* Himself in Christ. God is "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." This is the central doctrine of Christianity and from it springs the central dogma "God is love." The doubts engendered by the war showed that this is not, as was often too lightly assumed, a truth of natural religion. In the deepest sense it is a truth revealed by Christ, though the approach to it was prepared by the prophetic writings and the Divine Spirit Who never fails them that seek Him. Christ is the complete revelation of God, and nothing in the Old Testament or outside it which is irreconcilable with this revelation is binding on the conscience of a Christian.

It is maintained that our Lord did not teach a doctrinal or dogmatic system. This is doubtless true in the sense that He had not (as we have) to think out and formulate His principles. He knows, as the fourth Gospel puts it, "Who He is, and whence He is."

There is no doubt or uncertainty in His utterance : His mind is—to speak reverently—consistent, *orderly*. Therefore His doctrine drops as the rain and distils as the dew : it is one with the heavenly order which it interprets and reveals.

Our Lord's doctrinal teaching is mainly found (apart from the parables) in the fourth Gospel ; whose date and authorship are subjects of debate among modern scholars. But the reader should note that Dr. Armitage Robinson has lately given cogent reasons for concluding that it is a *first-century* document ; as there is no extant author of the second century in any degree capable of producing so profound a work. (Of course there is abundant evidence that it existed in the second century—e.g. the testimony of Tatian, Polycarp, Papias, Irenaeus.)

In using this Gospel as a basis for doctrinal teaching the Christian preacher may at least confidently maintain this position—that our Lord, the living Head of the Church, has revealed through the fourth Gospel by His Spirit what He would have us believe as to our mystical union with Him. The book is no unhistorical allegory, but an inspired model and example of the doctrinal teaching of Christ, preserved as a guide to His method ; embodying His mind and expressing it. This is the minimum required by the facts of Christian experience ; and it is enough.

II. ANALYSIS OF THE SERMON AT CAPERNAUM

Read S. John vi. 26–65.

1. In this sermon our Lord expounds a mystical doctrine—namely that He is not only the imparter of life to the soul, but also the inner support and guide of life. The inwardness of religion, the union and communion of the creature with the Creator, is always a "hard saying" to the multitude, who naturally crave—now as then—for something tangible and "sensible."

Jesus therefore starts from that. He is about to disclose His Person and His Humanity as *the food of the soul*. Here, then, He finds a starting-point which interests them — viz. *hunger* and its *satisfaction*. "You have come here seeking Me," He says, "because yesterday you were hungry and I fed you. But I have still better food to offer you. Those loaves of yesterday perish in the using: to-day they are gone. I can give you a food which suffers no change—which abides in a man as a source of power; which is the secret of eternal life (see *vv.* 16, 27). To ensure this the Father has set His seal upon the Son."

Jesus proceeds to set before His hearers the *sacramental* character of human life, which has given a new direction to man's thought about himself and his Maker.

Every one knows that there is in us a "higher" and a "lower" self. There is an

obvious connection and an equally obvious difference between "flesh" and "spirit"—or in more popular speech between "body" and "soul." But also, equally, every one knows that he is one, not two: the self is one; "the rational soul and flesh are one man." What, then, is the relation between them?

It is natural to indulge the bodily desires—to "live after the flesh"—but it is felt to be wrong. In the moral revolt against this enslavement to the senses it is natural to loathe "the flesh" as evil—to despise and despair of it; and to seek a religion wholly "spiritual" and bodiless.

Our Lord, Who is Himself "a living Sacrament," will lead them to a deeper and more satisfying truth. These common and intimate things, *food* and *body* and *flesh*, shall not be despised: they shall acquire a new and more sacred meaning when men know Him Who has been set apart by the Father for the fulfilment of His purpose.

It is no abstract doctrine that He preaches; it is the whole man, flesh and spirit, that He comes to redeem and save.

2. Such teaching, profound and "mystical" as it undoubtedly is, was not unsuited to the simple and unlearned, who often go straighter and deeper into real life than the "wise and prudent." They have no doubt that they have souls as well as bodies—and that both body and soul will starve if they cannot get

food. But the question is how to get it. They think, naturally, in terms of work and wages —these working people. They ask "What work must we do to get the wages you promise?"

Again He leads them gently, this "Shepherd of souls." There is truth as well as error in their question: there *is* work for them to do, but God is not a landlord or householder who demands results before payment. He is a Father whose joy is in giving: their "work" is to stretch out their hands in adoring gratitude and take what He gives: this is the "work" of faith.

3. The thought of God at work in giving reminds them—I think Jesus meant it to remind them—of the "angels' food" spoken of in their Psalter; the manna "of which Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat" (Exod. xvi. 15). The "bread from heaven" was a gift of God to their fathers in the wilderness, and it was a clear sign; it was a proof, visible and authentic, that God was present with their nation and was ready to satisfy their needs. "Can Jesus repeat the miracle? Is this the meaning of the 'food' of which He speaks?" They have a tradition that when Messiah comes He will cause the manna to fall. Can Jesus make good that claim? (cf. *vv.* 30, 31).

In His answer our Lord throws light on the relation of symbol to sacrament. He takes up

the story of the manna. It was a symbol of the divine presence and care, and they do well to remember it. There still is to be seen at Tell Hum—which is probably the ancient Capernaum—the carving over the lintel of the entrance to the synagogue, depicting a pot of manna, with ornamentation of grapes and vine-leaves. Perhaps He pointed to it as He bids them press on from the sign to the thing signified : "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not the bread from heaven, but My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven." Moses was the dispenser and mediator of the gift, but the gift came from God. To-day a higher gift is theirs than the perishable manna : "The bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world" (see *v.* 33). He Who stands before them is Himself a living sacrament—a visible sign of spiritual grace ; a means whereby that grace is to be received ; a pledge to make them sure of the reality of the gift.

4. With solemn emphasis our Lord proceeds to declare, rather than to expound, the doctrine of the believer's sacramental union with Himself : "I am the Bread of life : I am the living Bread which cometh down from heaven : he that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood abideth in Me and I in him : he that eateth Me, he also shall live by Me" (cf. *vv.* 48–57). In this climax of the sermon Jesus does not explain but declares the truth which He desires

them to receive. This preaching is dogmatic in the best and truest sense. As Bishop Gore has said : "He lifts up their minds to a high and spiritual region when they could be in no danger of low and carnal misconceptions. But He plainly means them to understand that in some sense His manhood is to be imparted to those that believe in Him and feed upon Him as a principle of new and eternal life. There is to be an inflowing of His manhood into ours." The symbolism of the manna passes on to the recalling of a greater feast, the Passover, which His hearers are now going up to Jerusalem to commemorate : a Feast upon a Sacrifice (cf. *v.* 4). There the lamb would be slain—the symbol of atonement : and He is (as some of them may have heard the Baptist proclaim) "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world" (*S. John* i. 29, 36).

The hearers or readers of the closing sentences must feel that the effect is *cumulative*. In these weighty phrases He is laying down and placing squarely on one another the stones of a mighty breakwater which shall withstand the assault and shock of the waves of time.

And the climax of the sermon points to an event still in the future which some of them should see and in which they shall participate : this note of prophecy stirs the soul because it goes beyond present experience. The speaker sees something which is beyond their ken. But when, in the upper room at

Jerusalem, He at last made the supreme gesture, and broke the bread and gave the cup, those who surrounded Him would feel "This is what He meant at Capernaum!" Those calm yet awful words, that "hard saying" which caused many disciples to "go back and walk no more with Him" are now full of meaning—they reveal Him as the Word made Flesh, the food of the soul, and the Lamb whose death and blood-shedding bring life and peace.

III. Application

1. Doctrinal preaching is a principal part of the pastoral office: "Be thou a faithful dispenser of the Word of God: take thou authority to preach the Word of God: see that you never cease your labour, your care and diligence, until you have done all that lieth in you to bring all such as are or shall be committed to your charge, unto that agreement in the faith and knowledge of God, and to that ripeness and perfectness of age in Christ, that there be no place left among you either for error in religion or for viciousness in life." And the priest is further exhorted to be studious in reading and learning the Scriptures and "to draw all his care and studies this way." Plainly, then, a considerable amount of time both before and after Ordination should be devoted to doctrinal and dogmatic theology.

2. Post-ordination studies are now receiving

from some of our bishops more attention than has been usual hitherto, at least in the English Church. But much may be done by the young priest himself, without waiting for official action. It is necessary from the beginning to set apart a certain portion of each day for "reading," and thus to form a habit which increasing claims upon your time will be unable to break. This is really part of your duty to God and to your people: if you neglect it, spiritual failure is "the horrible punishment that will ensue." On the other hand, by perseverance you will "wax riper and stronger in your ministry."

3. "Reading makes a full man" is Bacon's famous aphorism: but a man may be full of knowledge and yet lacking in skill to impart it to others. Some men who are not technically "students" or "learned" are good teachers. They have the "gift" or the "knack" of imparting what they know. But a priest with vocation, even if not "a born teacher," need not fail, with determination and perseverance, to acquire a practical mastery of the art. A doctrinal sermon should be convincing, as to substance, and easily remembered, as to form. Therefore the arrangement of your material needs careful study. Analyse sermons by good preachers, and see how the whole discourse hangs together. Take as examples of form, e.g., the discourses of Athanasius against Arianism; Bourdaloue and Bossuet; Newman, Archishop Magee,

Phillips Brooks. Mark in these varied styles the construction of the sermon ; note how much the cumulative and convincing effect depends on the arrangement and marshalling of the argument. And note how the order of thought helps the memory, so that one link of the chain firmly grasped enables the reader, by natural association of ideas, to recall and, as it were, draw up the whole chain of doctrine.

4. In doctrinal preaching it is sometimes useful to take a *subject* rather than a " text." This forces the preacher to map out the ground which can be covered in the time at his disposal, and gives incisiveness to his teaching. The text may come at the end instead of the beginning, and clinch the argument as the climax to which you are leading your congregation.

IV. Questions

1. Do people see that the priest's life is not only consistent with his creed but *flows from it* ?

2. If we present doctrine in a dry and unattractive way, is it because we have not personally *lived through* the experience which the doctrine implies ?

3. Do we teach in due proportion what the Bishop of Bloemfontein used to call the " inner ring " truths of the Faith—man's need and God's salvation : the fact and meaning of sin : redemption through the Incarnation, Atone-

ment, and present grace of Christ : the Holy Spirit and His work through conversion and sacrament : the Church as the Holy Society and Body of Christ : the need of a changed life as the result of conversion and grace ?

4. "The modern man is not troubling about his sins." Is not this the secret of the restlessness and pessimism of much modern thinking and writing ? Does it not point to the duty of systematic instruction on the sacrament of Penance and Absolution ?

5. Do we lovingly teach the reciprocal relation of creed to conduct and conduct to creed ? Or do we allow people to think that they may keep them separate, *and still be Christians* ?

V. PRAYER

O ALMIGHTY God, Who hast built Thy Church upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the head corner-stone : Grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit by their doctrine that we may be made an holy temple acceptable unto Thee ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

STUDY IV

PREACHING BY PARABLE

I. The Parable

EVERY lover of children is familiar with the request "tell us a story." And teachers and speakers know the quickening of interest and attention when an apposite story is simply told. Tennyson gave wise counsel when he said that truth *embodied* in a tale can enter in by lowly doors. Even children of a larger growth need to have truth embodied. The story gives substance and objectivity to the abstract thought. The word clothes itself as it were with flesh : it can enter into the door of the mind and there abide. Psychology teaches that most people are "visual" rather than "auditory" ; they think of things as they *look*, not as they *sound*. A word like *sea* calls up the image of a smiling or stormy expanse of light and shade and movement ; and only secondarily the noise associated with it. There are many exceptions to this rule, but broadly speaking the distinction is useful, and modern education makes increasing application of it by the employment

of moving pictures, models and diagrams to supplement oral teaching. Even the great daily papers cannot now dispense with a "picture page" in making their popular appeal.

The story, analogy, illustration, or parable addresses itself to the mental eye — to the imagination, which sees things as they pass across the mental retina. In a tale well told we *see* the scenes described with a vividness often absent from the incidents of real life. Is not Crusoe more alive to most of us than Defoe, and Hamlet than Shakespeare? Such is the imaginative power of the story-teller.

The story has a further claim as a vehicle of instruction. Logical reasoning and abstract thought are for the few: the story is for the multitude. The imagination and emotions are strong in many whose reasoning faculty is undeveloped. And the Gospel is not for the few but for mankind.

Is not this what S. Paul means by "the foolishness of preaching"? The deep mysteries of God, the Incarnation, the Atonement, the Resurrection, are "openly set forth, placarded among us." The curtain is withdrawn and the drama of redemption is unfolded to the eye of faith.

It is unnecessary for our purpose to give more than a passing reference to the various forms which the story may take as a vehicle of instruction. Homer uses the *simile* with a

wealth of imaginative detail ; Aesop is the undisputed master of the use of *fable* ; Plato of the *myth*. Another form of the story is the *allegory*, of which the *Pilgrim's Progress* is perhaps the best known example. All these forms might be illustrated from the Old Testament, and also the *parable*, which is our Lord's chosen method of instruction in the form of a story.

The parable was already familiar among the Jews in His day. Our Lord was probably acquainted with some of them, e.g. those referred to by Archbishop Trench in his classical work, the " Rosebuds in the King's Garden," the " Three Friends," the " Wild Goat," the " Fish in the Stream." This form of teaching is adapted to the Oriental mind, and Jesus made it so completely His own that the word parable in modern speech is confined to those in the Gospels. Thirty of these are recorded by the Synoptists, and they all deal with common features of contemporary life : the sower, the darnel, the mustard seed, the seed growing secretly, the barren tree, the leaven, the hid treasure, the pearl, the talents, the pounds, the lost drachma, the lost sheep, the draw-net, the two sons, the unmerciful servant, the labourers in the vineyard, the wicked husbandmen, the marriage of the king's son, the ten virgins, the friend at midnight, the two debtors, the good Samaritan, the rich fool, the prodigal son, the unjust steward, the un-

just judge, the Pharisee and publican, the great supper, the unprofitable servant.

Our Lord's use of parable marks it as a better vehicle of divine truth than the simile, the allegory, or the myth. These may illustrate the ways of God with men ; but the parable assumes that the divine handiwork is all *of a piece*. If nature is " the visible garment of God " it is a robe woven *from the top* throughout. The God of nature is also the God of grace. He is the Maker of all things, visible and invisible : the physical and the psychical are alike under His care. God rules throughout His whole universe ; as Martensen expresses it, " The God of religion is also the Lord of the creation." Thus common things, looked at from the standpoint of Jesus, throw light on eternal processes.

It would be an exaggeration to say that we can fully estimate God's dealings with His human children by an observation of natural law ; or that, as Henry Drummond maintained, the laws of the spiritual world are simply " natural law " indefinitely prolonged, being in fact " the same laws." Obviously they are not the same, for God forgives and " nature " does not. But creation and redemption flow from the same Source and are guided by the same Hand. Our Lord's parables are therefore something more than illustrations : in Professor Moulton's words, " The tacit assumption is that the same laws are valid

for moral and religious as for daily practical life."

Jesus was the typical Son of Man because He was uniquely the Son of God. His human and divine nature were in perfect accord : in Him the great saying of Plato finds fulfilment, "All nature is akin." Thus He was at home with the common people who heard Him gladly, and shared the simple, common life of men. And His love of all things normal and natural shines out in His parables. Here lies the secret of the joy which distinguished the ministry of Jesus from that of John Baptist. He wishes His joy to abide in His disciples ; He wants their "joy to be full." Joyfulness is to be a mark of His followers. He says that He is come that they "may have life, and have it more abundantly."

We feel that He enjoys the fine evening "when the sky is red" ; the fields "white to harvest" ; the beauty of the lilies more royal than the robes of Solomon. He loves the birds of the air, and the hen with her brood : above all the "kindly race of men" who sow and reap and tend the vine. Humour is not absent from His parables. He describes the man in bed at midnight driven in desperation to get up by the continual knocking at the door : the pushing person who takes the reserved seat and is "put in his place" by his host : the people who are always dissatisfied, like children who will neither play at weddings

nor funerals. Nothing human was alien to Him.

> Jesus, whose lot with us was cast,
> Who saw it out, from first to last:
> Whose humorous eye took in each phase
> Of full rich life this world displays,
> Yet evermore kept fast in view
> The far-off goal it leads us to—
> Would I could win and keep and feel
> That heart of love, that spirit of steel.

II. ANALYSIS.—THE PRODIGAL SON

Read S. Luke xv. 12–32.

1. This parable may be taken as typical of our Lord's method. Unlike the parable of the sower it is left to teach its own lesson without comment. Its occasion was the criticism of the scribes and Pharisees that Jesus consorted with the godless and profane; its theme is the redemptive power of love. No doubt it convinced the disciples, if not the rabbis, that God loved the "sinners of the Gentiles" as much as He loved the chosen people. It may teach us a lesson which the parochial clergy need to remember, that there is more joy in the conversion of sinners than in the edifying of the "faithful." The missionary spirit is essential in the pastoral office, at home or abroad. This is why this parable has been called *evangelium in evangelio*.

2. The story is short and simple. It has

the dramatic qualities of directness, movement, completeness. It is no uncommon story; youth's natural desire to "see the world" leading to the selfish pursuit of pleasure: a rake's progress of dissipation, and the consequent disillusionment. Then the stirrings of remorse as the memory of home rises and reproaches him with the happiness he has thrown away. Upon this a nobler shame supervenes. He bethinks himself what his ingratitude, "sharper than a serpent's tooth," must mean to his father. Remorse softens into repentance: he must return and confess his fault and make such amends as may be possible. "I will arise and go to my father, and say unto him, Father, I have sinned . . . make me as one of thy hired servants."

3. It was the memory of home and all that it implied of paternal affection that touched the heart of the prodigal; and the reality proved better than he had dared to hope. "Love bears, endures, hopes all things; it never fails." The eager welcome, the robe, the ring, the feast, express the wealth of affection which only waits opportunity to lavish itself on the beloved object. Such, Jesus implies, is the love of God to those whom the world counts as "ne'er do weels" and the Christian world as hardened sinners.

> For the love of God is broader than the measures of man's mind,
> And the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind.

This parable is somewhat strangely used in some quarters to-day to disparage the doctrine of the Atonement. It is said that repentance is the only thing needed to ensure forgiveness and that the Atonement is needless. But plainly the prodigal did not feel that his repentance earned or deserved forgiveness and reinstatement : it was the condition but not the cause of the great reconciliation. He was still " unworthy to be called son." What he had done he had done, and no future service could undo it. The movement of atonement must come from the father's side. And so *for love's sake* the father forgives, just as for Christ's sake (Who is the manifestation and Son of His love) the heavenly Father forgives us. This is the miracle of forgiveness : " Thou hast turned my heaviness into joy : Thou hast put off my sackcloth and girded me with gladness."

4. The epilogue of the parable brings out into strong relief the joy of forgiving and being forgiven by contrasting it with the grudging temper of the elder brother who stands upon his rights and deserving. The father loves both his sons, the elder not less than the younger : " Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine." The satisfaction to a parent's heart in a consistent life and rectitude of conduct is a calm and abiding happiness ; but joy is an emotion, and beyond all argument there is more joy in recovering what we have

lost than in never losing it : " This thy brother was dead and is alive again, he was lost and is found."

III. APPLICATION

1. Our Lord's use of parable consecrates the story as a means of imparting truth. This should make it impossible for the preacher to " drag in " a story to give fictitious interest to a dull discourse.

2. It follows that the story should really illustrate the truth you wish to impress. It should never be used simply for the sake of telling a story. Some preachers get into their *anecdotage* before they reach middle age. Shun " helps to preachers " which take the form of ready-made illustrations for every occasion.

3. The story should be *ad hominem* and *ad rem*. It must illustrate the matter in hand. It should grow out of the subject with which you are dealing. If the hearers remember the story and forget the application the story has failed as an adjunct to preaching.

4. Illustrations from your own travels and experience are fresher than those gathered from books. This is one of the benefits which your people derive from your holidays. A tramp abroad or in the Lake district will react beneficially on your preaching. It is the duty of the hard-working priest to have an annual holiday ; and many a congregation would do

wisely to send their clergy abroad, e.g. to Palestine, where and when it is possible for them to do so.

5. *Details* are interesting to every one, and make a story move and live. Note how our Lord particularizes the carob-pods ("husks") which were only eaten by the very poor; note also the signs of festivity ("music and dancing"); also the robe and the ring. The preacher must be careful that the details are *right*. A landsman must be careful in a story of the sea: there may be a seaman present.

6. A well-chosen story is often its own best commentary; the application is not to be overdone: allow something to the mother-wit of the hearers.

IV. QUESTIONS

1. The Old Testament is full of dramatic stories in the form of history, analogy, parable, illustration. Can we tell them simply, in our own words? Do we realize that to many people they are half-forgotten, or even new?

2. Do we read missionary literature with its stories of adventure for Christ and His kingdom? Are we familiar with the lives of, e.g., Raymond Lull, Joseph Curling, Dr. Marks, Emily Laurence? Why are illustrations so seldom drawn from the mission field?

3. Do we sometimes fail to get into touch

with our people because our sermons are too aloof from their interests ?

4. Are we *serious enough* to dare to be humorous on occasion after the manner and with the purpose of the Master ?

5. Do we know our parables well enough to go into details as He did ?

V. PRAYER

GRANT to us, O Lord, the royalty of inward happiness and the serenity which comes from living close to Thee. Daily increase in us the sense of joy, and let the Eternal Spirit of the Father dwell in our souls and bodies, filling every corner of our hearts with light and grace : so that, bearing about with us the infection of a good courage, we may be diffusers of life, and may meet all ills and cross accidents with a gallant and high-hearted happiness ; giving Thee thanks always for all things. Amen.

STUDY V

PREACHING BY QUESTION AND ANSWER

I. Catechizing

OUR Lord's preaching took many forms, according to the occasion and the audience He addressed. We restrict the word "preaching" to a religious discourse delivered in public, usually from a pulpit. He preached in houses, on the hill side, from a boat, on the shore. And His preaching sometimes took the form of instruction by question and answer, which is almost the definition of "catechizing."

One such discourse or conversation is recorded by S. Mark (viii. 27), where the questions lead up to the great confession of S. Peter, "Thou art the Christ." Another very perfect example of catechetical instruction is the interview with the rich young ruler (S. Matt. xix. 16), where, contrary to the former example, the disciple puts the questions and Jesus gives the answers. Another is the conversation with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, which will be considered here.

It is well to remember that the catechetical

method of preaching can claim the example of our Lord Himself, and that we have recorded instances as to how He used the method. Any method which has this sanction must be sacred to the Christian preacher and must bring its own blessing with it.

We do not read of our Lord using the method of the catechism with *children*. But this does not prove the negative. The disciples, we are told, "rebuked" the mothers who brought their children to Him for His blessing, thinking no doubt that He had more important work on hand. But Jesus was "much displeased" at their want of understanding and called the little ones around Him: "Suffer them to come to Me" are His words; they evidently *wanted* to come. And I think He must have conversed with them and they with Him — even as in His own childhood He listened to the rabbis at Jerusalem and "asked them questions."

There may have been similar instances unrecorded in the Gospels. It is plain that the Saviour was more in sympathy with child-life than were His chroniclers.

Nevertheless, the instruction of children in religious knowledge was valued and practised by the Jews in our Lord's day. Edersheim[1] has given a graphic and detailed account of the home teaching and the curriculum of the village schools in Palestine.

[1] *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. Vol. I, pp. 227 ff.

And in the New Testament we have references to teaching by means of catechizing, e.g. S. Luke i. 4, where "instructed" should be translated "catechized"; with which may be compared, in the original, Acts xxi. 21, Romans ii. 18, and Galatians vi. 6.

An important part of preaching, therefore, and a most valuable part, is the public catechizing of children in church, which is enjoined upon the clergy in the Book of Common Prayer. And the Church Catechism[1] is by common consent the noblest model of this method. Every priest should know it by heart, the *questions* as well as the answers; for the form of the questions is admirable and full of instruction.

But the skilful catechist will take it as a model and a basis, and build his instruction upon it. To be able to repeat it by rote may prove a good memory but not necessarily a devout disposition. And the test of our work is not mental agility but spiritual growth. The Samaritan woman was keenly interested in what was orthodox or the reverse, but was oblivious of spiritual and moral issues.

Yet the memory is a good gift of God and is to be cultivated. The disciples were taught a form of prayer by our Lord, and only gradually came to realize its depth of meaning.

[1] The revision of the Catechism was raised by the writer in Convocation, 1922, and a Resolution carried.

The reaction against "learning by heart" may be carried to the absurdity of nobody learning anything until he understands it! No doubt there is an unintelligent and parrot-like "learning by rote" which has falsely usurped the name of "instruction"; but to say this is not to condemn the method but its misapplication.

The true principle in question and answer is to begin, as the Church Catechism does, at the point of *interest* — what is called "making contact" with the child's mind: and then to proceed step by step from the *known* to the *unknown*. The teacher by questioning draws out what is implicit in the pupil's mind and makes it explicit. But this is not all; if it were, every child as he grows could educate himself by reflecting upon his own mental processes. It was once thought that education was like pouring water into a cistern; that the child's mind was an empty vessel which merely needed filling.[1] To-day the catchword is that education is drawing out, not pouring in. But education is neither; it is a process of growth, where no harvest will be reaped unless there is receptive soil (capacity) and seed sown (instruction).

New knowledge has to be imparted; for the Gospel is a *revelation*, not a mere republication of "natural religion" as the Deists of

[1] This was based on the Lockian philosophy of the mind as a blank sheet of paper, a *tabula rasa*.

the eighteenth century supposed.[1] "What is your name?" The child already knows that by use and custom people have names; he does not know, until he has been taught, that the possession of a *Christian* name, given in Baptism assures him of a new relation to Christ, and of his membership in a divine society. But if knowledge is to be assimilated the child's mind must co-operate in the process: hence the definition of catechizing is "a method of teaching by questioning and *correcting the answers*."[2]

The possibilities of this method are great and by no means exhausted. The Church Catechism of 1662 is not the last word on the subject; "a Catechism of the sixteenth century is manifestly inadequate to the needs of the twentieth." Some educationists think that we should have a very simple catechism for children, and a fuller instruction for adolescents. Why should there not be a "catechism of the faithful"—not to be learned by heart — out of which the priest might instruct his people? After the explanation of the part selected, the answers might be repeated by priest and people together. We are told that people are very ignorant and ill-instructed in the principles of the Faith: also that there is a desire for instruction on the part of many. Does not the remedy lie to some extent in the recovery and practice of the art of catechizing?

[1] *See* Toland, *Christianity as old as the Creation.*

[2] Dr. Johnson.

II. The Discourse with the Woman at the Well

Read S. John iv. 7–26.

1. This conversation, though not recorded by the Synoptists, must have had a place in the oral tradition which preceded the Gospels. It shows the hand of a contemporary in its reference to "Sychar," and to "Jacob's well," which still retains the name. The incident recorded illustrates very simply what I have called our Lord's method of catechizing. Jesus opens the conversation by asking for a drink of water. He is tired and thirsty, and the question assumes and arouses the woman's interest and natural kindliness; for it is natural to feel kindly to those to whom we do a kindness. Thus a point of contact is gained.

2. As He drinks—I like to think that she gave and He received, as later He "received the vinegar" from the soldier — she comes out with the question which is puzzling her, "How can a Jew allow himself to be beholden to a Samaritan?"

3. In His answer Jesus half conceals and half reveals the meaning of the reply: it is an answer calculated to make her think. It might be paraphrased, "This cooling draught is good: water is the gift of God. But there is 'a thirst that from the soul doth spring' which craves for a 'draught divine.' If you knew

all, it is *you* who would be asking and I bestowing."

4. She cannot yet rise to His meaning. She thinks "you have no rope nor bucket; the well is deep. Jacob gave us the well; are you greater than he? Can you do more than he did for us?" But she is approaching the decisive question of Christianity—"*Who* is this? Who can the stranger be?"

5. Following the line of the woman's interest in Jacob and the well Jesus replies that the water *is* satisfying—it quenches thirst. Yet those who drink will again be thirsty. Satisfaction for a moment is not enough. Is she satisfied—*with her life?* Does she know that there is within reach an inward spring of satisfaction and happiness, overflowing, never failing?

6. The answer is disappointing; it is of present comfort and satisfaction that she is thinking—how good to be saved the daily journey to the well; how good always to have a supply at hand! Her conscience evidently slumbers—she will go home and forget the conversation with the stranger. Can her heart be touched to higher things through child or husband? "Go, call thy husband and come hither."

7. The Good Physician has touched the hidden wound. As she replies "I have no husband," the words uttered as a defence turn into a confession, and she becomes aware that

He reads her through and through. Dissatisfaction has been the bane of her life ; and it has led her into sin.

8. She is ashamed ; but for the moment stronger than shame is the peasant's instinct of curiosity. How can He know ? And if He knows—" Sir, I perceive that Thou art a prophet "—will He solve for her the disputed question as to which " place of worship she ought to attend," Jerusalem or Gerizim ? How satisfactory to turn from the moral question to a discussion on ecclesiastical order !

9. Even this question, which was beside the point, and intended by the questioner to lead to a " safer " subject, Jesus does not reject : rather He uses it to unfold, through her to mankind, the deepest truth of His gospel—" God is Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth : for the Father seeketh such to worship Him."

10. The woman makes one more effort to resist the Power that is drawing her to surrender : " It will be surely time enough," she says, " to make the great decision when Messiah comes."

11. Thereupon our Lord imparts the great truth to which all the conversation has been leading up ; which contains the answer to all her questionings, and ours—

> Ah ! fondest, blindest, weakest
> I am He whom thou seekest !
> Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me.

"Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am He."

III. APPLICATION

1. I have tried to bring out in the above analysis the mental commerce, so to speak, between the teacher and learner. The interchange of thought is of the essence of real catechizing.

2. Our Lord never "brake the bruised reed nor quenched the smoking flax." He took what was true in the woman's answers and made them stepping-stones to higher things. This may be called the golden rule of catechizing. Do not say "No, you are mistaken," or, "The answer is wrong"—unless it is hopelessly wrong—but rather "You are partly right, but there is something more": or "I see what you mean; can we put it better *thus*? Is not this what you meant to say?"

If the answer was quite wrong, you may, in the Socratic manner, draw out by questioning that the answer would lead to an *impasse*. Then resume: "Well, you didn't mean *that*; let us try again."

3. There is a depth and mystery in religious truth which must be *felt* by the teacher before it can be *caught* by the learner. But the statement of truth must be clear; there is no merit in vagueness, which only indicates mental confusion. Our Lord's statements have the clarity as well as the depth of truth.

4. Note that in catechizing our Lord puts the answer in a shape which is easy to remember, and which forms a *complete statement* of the fact to be remembered. For instance, "What is the great commandment in the Law?" The answer is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God . . . *this is the first and great commandment.*"

5. If you are a priest, do not neglect the plain rubric in the Prayer Book which requires the curate of every parish diligently on Sundays and Holy Days to instruct the children of the parish in some part of the Catechism.

6. Where there is a Church school, do not excuse yourself on the ground that you are "not a teacher" or that you "don't understand children." Those priests who try, though untrained at college, to learn the art of catechizing will find that skill grows with study and practice. Go and watch a trained teacher at work. You will find that far from resenting your presence as an intrusion he will welcome it.

IV. QUESTIONS

1. We have been told that multitudes of English people are "almost totally ignorant of the very elements of religious faith and practice." Yet a vast number pass through Church schools. How far is the parish priest to blame if he neglects to teach in the Elementary school?

2. Might not an instruction sometimes take the place of the sermon on Sunday evenings, the "answers" (carefully drawn up beforehand) being repeated by clergy and people together?

3. With a view to the improvement of method in the Sunday school do we invite a trained teacher of the day school to give lectures on the art of teaching to those who "take a class" but sometimes for lack of method fail to *teach* on Sundays?

4. Let the reader exercise himself in the art of instruction by framing his own answers to such questions as the following:

(1) Why did God become Man?
(2) What is faith?
(3) What is the Church?
(4) For what purpose does the Church exist?
(5) What is the chief service of the Church?
(6) What is the benefit of Confirmation?
(7) What is a Christian's duty to the world we live in?

V. PRAYER

BLESS, O Lord, the Universities, Training Colleges, and Schools of our country. Grant that a supply of faithful men and women may never be wanting to bring up our children in Thy faith and fear. Give skill and power and zeal to all catechists and teachers; that they may have the ability to impart what they have learned in communion with Thee, Who art our Teacher and Master and Saviour. Amen.

STUDY VI

PREACHING BY EXHORTATION

I. Exhortation

TO exhort is to animate, encourage, incite to good deeds or right action. The power of preaching as a driving force is mainly found here. By its very nature a whole discourse should not consist of exhortation. Our Lord's recorded sermons contain exhortation, but not one of them consists of this alone. Therefore we shall consider in this study the subjects and method of His exhortation, which is not absent from any of His sermons.

Exhortation appeals to the emotions. Our Lord made use of this appeal. Therefore this appeal has a rightful place in preaching.

The "emotionalism" in which preachers and congregations of a former day delighted was bound to provoke a reaction. Sudden "conversions," induced under conditions of excitement, passed and left the life unchanged. It was rightly felt that religion must be based on something less fluctuating than feeling, and that "a right judgement in all things" was more truly the gift of the Holy Ghost than the "enthusiasm" which a celebrated writer told

John Wesley was "a very horrid thing." But men and women have emotions, which if they find no outlet or response in religion, will flow in other channels.

The enormous power, for good or ill, of the emotions has been impressed upon us by a school [1] of thought which we cannot disregard; and from which the preacher has much to learn. The Christian believes that man is essentially a *rational* being (even though unreason often overpowers him in his present state), because all creation is seen by him in the light of the Divine Reason and Word of God Who (in S. Paul's phrase) was "before all things, and in whom all things cohere."

But if reason is meant to guide man, it is the emotions which give driving power to acts which reason perceives and approves. Therefore reason and emotion, as they have a place in human nature, should both be present in a man's religion. If it is false theology to decry reason, it is faulty psychology to try to eliminate emotion. Christianity appeals both to the "head" and "heart." Thus religion may become as rousing as patriotism, as inspiring as a bugle call.

What is the aim of exhortation? The conversion of the heart and will. But hearts are hard and cold, wills are weak or perverse. There is no power which can melt the one or change the other but the power of the Holy

[1] See *Social Psychology*: W. McDougall.

Spirit Himself : God alone can convert. Yet He can and does use converted men as His instruments. What S. Paul calls " the foolishness of preaching " seems a feeble weapon for so great a purpose. We must remember that God has chosen this means for His work to be done : unless we come to our people with a message which we have *received*—a word of exhortation which is delivered to them *through* us but *from* Him—we shall not exercise a ministry of conversion.

What is wrong is not emotion, but " emotionalism " ; shallowness instead of depth of feeling. In true exhortation " deep calleth unto deep." Unless the sacred fire glows in the preacher's breast no fire will be kindled in his hearers. Therefore behind the exhortation, giving it body and substance, must be religious habits and religious knowledge. A great master of exhortation who was full of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit has given this counsel—" Apply yourself to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine : meditate on these things : be absorbed in them : put *yourself* into them : for in doing so you shall save yourself and those that hear you."

If conversion of the heart and will be the aim of hortatory preaching, *from* what and *to* what is the hearer to be converted ? Briefly from *self* as the centre of interest—what William James called the " hot place " in consciousness—to God as the centre. When

the centre is really shifted, the emotions, thoughts, and actions revolve in a new and larger orbit ; the whole man is changed ; old things are passed away and all things become new.

In the preaching of Jesus we find the appeal addressed to the deepest needs of human nature. He exhorts to *faith* ; for without faith in a divine ordering and guidance man is the sport of circumstances. He exhorts to *repentance*. Without this we cannot break out of the vicious circle of sin and selfishness. He exhorts to *service*, in which the higher emotions are to find their outlet. All these are essential to conversion, though the emphasis on each varies with varying conditions. The older evangelical appeal was mainly *individual*, and concentrated with a noble intensity on personal faith and personal repentance, and the result was shown in the changed life and the devout character. To-day we are learning, it may be hoped, something further, namely that the test and proof of saintship is *service* ; it is " the kingdom of God " and the duties of citizenship in that Divine Fellowship that makes the strongest appeal to the best minds. It is felt that conversion is a narrow and even selfish thing unless the Christian shares in the activities of ministering love which marked the life of the Master.

There is a school of thought within the Church which distrusts the " service of man "

as the object of Christian endeavour, lest we should be distracted from the inward life of sacramental worship. But the fear is groundless ; prayer and sacrament *generate power*—and power must find its outlet and expression in service. "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister" expresses our Lord's principle of action. And again, "I am among you as he that serveth."

The exhortation to service comes home to men's "business and bosoms." It can link up creed with conduct, and the "holy mysteries" with the "good works which God hath prepared for us to walk in." For, as an acute but kindly critic has observed, "those who meet within the church walls on Sunday should not meet as strangers who find themselves together in the same lecture hall, but as co-operators in a public work. Thus meeting, they would not desire that the exhortation of the preacher should be, what in the nature of things it seldom can be, eloquent. It might become weighty with business, and impressive as an officer's address to his troops before a battle."

II. SUBJECTS OF OUR LORD'S EXHORTATION

1. Exhortations to *faith*.

"Have faith in God."[1] "Ask and ye shall receive."[2] "Come unto Me."[3] "All things

[1] S. Mark xi. 22. [2] S. Matt. vii 7.
[3] ibid., xi. 28.

are possible to him that believeth."[1] "It is I; be not afraid."[2] "Fear not, little flock."[3] "Let not your heart be troubled."[4]

2. Exhortations to *repentance*.

"The kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe the Gospel."[5] "Except ye repent ye shall perish."[6] "What shall it profit a man if he lose *himself*?"[7] "Forgive and ye shall be forgiven."[8] "As Moses lifted up the serpent."[9] "Go and sin no more."[10]

3. Exhortations to *service*.

"If any man will come after Me let him renounce self and take up his cross and follow Me."[11] "Take My yoke upon you."[12] "Whosoever willeth to save his life shall lose it."[13] "Go ye into all the world."[14] "When thou art converted strengthen thy brethren."[15] "Love your enemies."[16] "Inasmuch as ye did it."[17]

III. APPLICATION

1. It will be seen, if the passages above referred to are studied in their context, that our Lord touched the hearts of His hearers through the sentiments and emotions which are common to humanity. He chose the

[1] S. Mark ix. 23. [2] ibid., vi. 50 [3] S. Luke xii. 32.
[4] S. John xiv. 1. [5] S. Mark i. 15. [6] S. Luke xiii. 3.
[7] S. Mark viii. 26. [8] S. Luke vi. 37. [9] S. John iii. 14.
[10] ibid., viii. 11. [11] S. Matt. xvi. 24. [12] ibid., xi. 29.
[13] S. Mark viii. 35. [14] ibid., xvi. 15. [15] S. Luke xxii. 32.
[16] ibid., vi. 27. [17] S. Matt. xxv. 40.

objects around which He desired the system of emotional dispositions to find their centre. And a Christian psychology will endeavour to understand and follow His method. There are sentiments and emotions which, when not understood or not controlled, are powerful for harm, such as scorn, contempt, resentment. Of these Jesus exposed the evil effects as well as the inherent irrationality. But while these have their roots in the self-regarding or self-assertive instinct, they may be counterbalanced by the altruistic or self-sacrificing instinct with their emotions of subjection and self-abasement. Man, because he is *human* and not simply the strongest of the animals, has sentiments and emotions which are capable of responding to the Christian appeal, namely the complex emotions of admiration, wonder, awe, gratitude, reverence, compassion. To call forth these streams from the hard rock of human nature is the preacher's task.

2. The strongest of the "lower" instincts which appeal most directly to the senses, and are found probably in all animal life, are connected with self-assertion, self-display, reproduction, and pugnacity. These instincts exist in all men in varying degrees. Some plays, and I think all modern "advertisements," make their appeal to one or another of these. But the preacher sinks below his level when he addresses himself to the self-regarding instincts. It is an unworldly gospel that alone

can move the world. People expect and have a right to expect a higher call and an austerer code in the pulpit than is heard in the world's market-place. "The world will have use for us," said Dr. Figgis, "only so far as it believes that we are in touch with supernatural reality."

3. Our Lord touched the emotions of His hearers through their imagination—He made them *see* with the mind's eye the splendour of faith's adventure, the joy in heaven over the penitent, the nobility of service. In this He followed the method of the great prophets whose most moving appeals to Israel are couched in imaginative word-pictures. If the story of the Cross touches you, the emotion will be communicated to your hearers.

IV. QUESTIONS

1. It is a well-known fact that the arousing of emotion unless it lead to action (which may be interior or exterior) is deadening to the spiritual faculties. What effect has our exhortation? Do sinners become penitent, scoffers prayerful, spiteful people charitable, the hardhearted forgiving, the intemperate sober, the sensual chaste?

2. Do we seek in quiet hours of Retreat to renew our vocation by meditation, confession, and Sacrament?

3. Are our exhortations like arrows shot

into the air or like arrows shot at a mark? Are we like those preachers who "go up to the pulpit not knowing what they are going to say, and come down not knowing what they have said"?

V. PRAYER

O SAVIOUR of the world, whose loving heart is touched with the feeling of our infirmities and Who for our sakes didst undergo agony and death; lift up our weak imagination to the height of Thy divine compassion. Teach us to feel the sorrows of mankind as Thy sorrows and their sins as a renewal of Thy Passion. Draw us with the cords of Thy love. Convert us that we may strengthen our brethren. Give us power from on high to touch the hearts of Thy people to faith and penitence and service; for the sake of Thy dear love. Amen.

STUDY VII

PREACHING BY WARNING

I. Righteousness and Judgement

A TRUE religion must be true to the whole of human experience ; to God's dealings with us, and our relation to Him. Christ came to reveal these ; and we believe that His word is truth. We must distinguish between what we wish were true and what in fact is true, or we may easily fall into the narrow groove of a false subjectivism. We must make the effort " to see life steadily and see it whole." And that this requires an effort is undeniable. We admire unthinkingly the uniformity of nature and the reign of law ; but we are prone to deny or resent the uniformity of the divine nature (which is Righteousness), and the reign of divine law (which is Judgement). Righteousness would be unmeaning if wrong-doing brought no penalty ; law would be inoperative were there no connection (in Plato's phrase) between " sin and doom." The search for truth is the noblest of human motives ; the disinterested desire for truth is as admirable as it is rare. " Follow truth wherever it may

lead you" must imply to an honest thinker that he is ready to take the consequences.

The widespread interest shown in *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, *The Jesus of History*, *The Lord of Thought*, and kindred works, show that there is a real desire to get "back to Christ." And the historical spirit should warn us against refashioning His portrait, after the manner of Renan or Matthew Arnold, in terms of our own ephemeral predilections or prejudices.

We cannot deny, unless we do violence to the records, that the divine righteousness and judgement are an essential part of the Gospel of the Kingdom as preached by our Lord. God is a father, but, in the words of the fourth Gospel, He is a "righteous father:" and Christ claims that "for judgement He has come into this world." In this He is in line with the prophets of the Old Testament, who discerned and proclaimed the inflexible holiness and righteousness of Jehovah and His moral government of the world. Hence the solemn stress laid by them and Him on the divine wrath against sin; the need of conversion of heart and repentance. Hence also arises the need of Atonement, since even the change of heart which is called repentance cannot by itself undo what, in fact, has been committed.

Calvin, Luther, Knox, and their followers, with their doctrines of wrath, reprobation, and predestination, have produced such a travesty

of the real character of God as revealed in Christ, that no sacrifice seems too great that rids us of it. But it is useless to escape Scylla if we fall into Charybdis ; and it is of no avail to avoid Calvinism if we fall into the earlier and more attractive heresy of Marcion, which, as Professor Goudge has shown us, reappears in much popular theology to-day.

Marcion and his modern disciples maintain that a God of love cannot be a God of punishment, or a Christ of love the future Judge of the world. But are love and retributive justice incompatible ? Are wrath and punishment always synonymous with vindictiveness and cruelty ? Our Lord did not think so, if we accept His words as they are recorded : and a Christian can hardly claim to be wiser than He. Sin, punishment, judgement, propitiation, atonement, these are ideas with which modern thought is impatient : " crowd on more sail " is the cry, " and throw the ballast overboard ! " More experienced navigators know the peril of " making shipwreck concerning the Faith."

Some recent words of the Bishop of Gloucester are worth our consideration : " The great body of people in the world are suffering because they do not believe in God. A real belief in God, His providence, His justice, His judgement, the belief that we are responsible to Him for our lives, the belief that if we do not fulfil His will we can get no

happiness here or hereafter—all these things people put aside, and even the Christian Church seldom teaches us any of these things." We may and must restate the truth in terms intelligible to the people who are around us ; but we did not make our religion, nor can we remake it.

There are signs already that some of the post-war theology is wearing rather thin ; that what was hastily improvised to meet an emergency will have to be scrapped before solid reconstruction can begin. The righteousness of God and His judgement must have a place in a religion which will prove adequate to man's whole experience. There is a law, a judgement, a punishment "revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men," and conscience demands its vindication. A more virile and severe theology than that which was popular in the last decade of the nineteenth century or the first of the twentieth is demanded by those who have lived through the catastrophic experiences of the Great War.

Consider our Lord's preaching from this standpoint. He compared Himself to the prophet who brought a king and people to national repentance by preaching the divine judgement on sin, and asserted that "a greater than Jonah is here." He gave us the great parables of the wheat and the tares, the sheep and the goats, the wise and foolish virgins, the man

without the wedding garment, the rich fool who thought himself safe, and the poor fool who built his house on sand. Evidently the urgency of decision, the certainty of God's law of judgement, the *risks* which encompass this mortal life are plainly before His mind : and after two millenniums they still startle us out of sloth and irresolution by their emphasis on the eternal issues of the moment. Life, they seem to say, is not a process but a choosing.

If the experiences which these parables illustrate are true in fact, they demand startling expression. They make their appeal to those who know what life is, and death, and sin. If there are things which a man *ought* to fear, men will never in this world cease to need a spur to conduct. It is like a nerve which quivers and yet is a sign and condition of life as we know it. Fear is one of the primary emotions and has its uses. We are learning from psychology that man is not altogether the self-confident, self-assertive creature of Nietzsche's imagination. The instinct of submission, with its expression in fear and awe, is as universal as the instinct of self-preservation. Though "perfect love casteth out fear," yet the "fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

The saints may "look to and hasten the coming of the Day of God," they may "lift up their heads as the Day of Redemption"

draws near : but most of us need the Law as a preparation for the Gospel : " the law is a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ."

II. ANALYSIS OF THE SERMON TO SCRIBES AND PHARISEES

Read S. Matthew xxiii. 1–39.

1. This is one of the most impassioned and searching of the recorded sermons of our Lord. Note, then, the quiet exordium and the warning to the multitude, that He may not be misunderstood. He is about to denounce the sins of the accredited teachers of religion, the scribes and Pharisees. He knows that the crowd always likes an attack on those in authority ; such censure increases their own self-esteem and seems to offer the pleasing prospect of throwing off a yoke. Therefore He begins with an emphatic and calm assertion of the righteousness and authority of Law. It is not Law that He condemns but the perversion of Law. " The rabbis and Pharisees occupy the chair of Moses : therefore practise and lay to heart everything they tell you : but do not follow their example, for they do not practise what they preach." He proceeds to explain that the true test of greatness is the capacity to serve : in the kingdom of grace the humble have the highest place ; those who exalt themselves the lowest. The true leader bears the burden of the people. These

leaders " bind heavy burdens on the shoulders of others but do not lift a finger to help." Indeed all their " religious " acts are done for their own aggrandizement and with a view to the increase of their prestige. See how they make broad the " texts " which they wear as charms and increase the size of their tassels, and love the place of honour at dinner, and the front seats in the synagogue, and the deference which ignorance pays to self-importance !

2. The issue is set plainly before His audience : He is come not (as they may have hoped) to destroy the Law but to fulfil it. Unless their righteousness is deeper than the formalism of scribe and Pharisee, and goes to the very spirit of the commandment, they can have no entry into the kingdom of Jesus. They must stoop to enter the door of this kingdom, they must serve to reign ! And let them not flatter themselves that the personal character of the minister of religion, however unworthy, makes his message invalid.

3. Jesus now passes from the general to the particular, from the principle of service to its application. The section which follows (*vv.* 13–36) is aglow with passionate indignation. The contrast between status and character, between creed and conduct, is never so appalling as in the case of those who are the accredited and commissioned ministers of God. Therefore it is the sins of the religious world which stir the wrath of the Lamb. The

woes which follow deal specifically with the sins to which the religious world is prone, when worldly motives prevail and poison the spiritual atmosphere.

(*a*) "Woe unto you . . . for ye shut the door of the kingdom in men's faces. Ye go not in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in." The power of the keys, the authority to bind and to loose—essential in some form to a true ministry—is here abused. The people perish for lack of knowledge, and the teachers, who should unlock the treasures of divine grace, have taken away the key!

(*b*) Most naturally, as history proves, and yet strangely, this obscurantism is joined to proselytizing ambition: "Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte." Religious zeal, the noble impulse of the missionary spirit, has degenerated into the worship of success: a dominant Church, a policy of ecclesiastical aggrandizement, have taken the place of the shepherding of souls. And their converts better their instruction: they are more intolerantly unspiritual than their teachers!

(*c*) The love of prestige, coupled with worldly ambition, lowers the standard of truth. Casuistry becomes no longer a legitimate branch of moral theology, but a labyrinth of sophistical subtleties. The evasion of honest obligations becomes an art. Our Lord denounces woe to such fools and blind guides.

Do they think that God is dead? "He that shall swear by heaven sweareth by the throne of God and by *Him that sitteth thereon*."

(*d*) These fine-drawn distinctions between "the temple" and "the gold of the temple," "the altar" and "the gift upon the altar," confuse and blur the moral vision. These small things—as happens in dreams—assume gigantic proportions and great things shrink into invisibility. A gnat which would make a cup ceremonially unclean is strained out: a camel is swallowed unawares. They pay tithe on mint and anise and cummin but omit the weightier matters of the Law.

(*e*) When the vision of God as a present reality is lost, moral and spiritual insight disappear in a twilight of the virtues: there remain as guides to conduct only custom and tradition. The voice of the past is meant to guide present action, not to stifle it. "Ye build the tombs of the prophets and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous"; yet when a prophet appears among you, you kill and crucify him. "Fill up then the measure of your fathers. Serpents and vipers, crawling amid the tombs of the dead past, creep into your holes ere the judgement of Gehenna overtake you!"

(*f*) In the final apostrophe to Jerusalem Jesus reveals His sacred heart. It is *love*, deep, divine, burning, which has wrung from Him this stern challenge. He loves this city

of God, this hill of Sion, the joy of the whole earth : that is why He so urgently warns them of their peril. His prophetic ear has already caught the sound of the Roman eagles hastening to the prey : He would save His people, " as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings "—if only they will come to Him and find rest to their souls.

III. APPLICATION

1. We need to-day a fresh conviction of the awfulness of the prophetic office with which we are entrusted. To warn is as necessary as to encourage ; but it demands deeper and more Christlike qualities than most of us possess. Only the real lover of souls can feel and dare to express adequately the divine hatred of sin. Righteous anger, at the right times and towards the right objects, is a characteristic of the highest love, as every true parent knows. If our warnings are feeble, is it because our love is weak ?

2. The sermons which make the deepest impression, which arouse the conscience, and stir the will to repentance, are those which awaken the emotion of *awe*. Compare what has been called " the great arraignment " in the first chapter of Isaiah, or S. Stephen's sermon on the eve of his martyrdom. In modern England compare Keble's sermon on National Apostasy which introduced the Trac-

tarian revival ; or Magee on " The Gathering of the Vultures " in *The Gospel and the Age*.

3. Warnings and admonitions may be rejected, but at our peril we withhold them. He is a false prophet who blesses an unrighteous cause, or fails to warn the nation of its danger. The preacher must not forget that it has always been the mark of the true prophet to dare to proclaim the truth, and to take the risk of unpopularity. " The Church has not always failed in her mission when she has failed to attract and conciliate. There is another and a more awful mission that she is accomplishing in the world when she testifies and condemns."

4. Many habitual churchgoers need a new conversion : they need to be brought to a fresh conviction of sin, confession of sin, and amendment of life. S. Paul records his mission-preaching experience in the phrase " Knowing the terror of the Lord we persuade men."

IV. QUESTIONS

1. Does much preaching to-day fail to " get right home " because the speaker does not convey his message as a matter of life and death ? Do we realize the infinite importance of *some* moment in every man's life ? and that that moment may come to *some one* present if the Spirit gets clear utterance through the surrendered will of the speaker ?

2. Do we habitually make the effort, e.g. as

we read the morning paper, to view each day *sub specie aeternitatis?* Do we see and preach God's judgements as revealed not only in ancient but in contemporary history? Do we apply, as the prophets did, divine standards to current events?

3. If there is to be a future for Europe and the world, we must risk everything on a spiritual interpretation of life. Men of vision in the State no less than in the Church anticipate the ruin of a civilization founded on a policy of selfish materialism. Psychology teaches us that fear is one of the emotions which influence most strongly the "group-consciousness." Is this an unworthy motive, or a fact to be turned to spiritual account?

V. PRAYER

O LORD Jesu Christ, Who at Thy first coming didst send Thy messenger to prepare Thy way before Thee; Grant that the ministers and stewards of Thy mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready Thy way by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that at Thy second coming to judge the world we may be found an acceptable people in Thy sight, Who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

STUDY VIII

THE OLD TESTAMENT IN PREACHING

I. The Holy Scriptures

IT is well for us who "preach the Word" to remember how our own religious knowledge first began. What S. Paul wrote to Timothy is probably true in our experience: "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures." And it should be inspiring to consider that our early experience was that of Jesus also. Indeed in one respect our experience was richer than His; for His Bible was the Old Testament, and we had in addition the wonderful series of stories of His own most holy life.

It has been said that the religious knowledge of Jesus "was rooted in the essential teaching of the Old Testament." And it is possible to form an idea of the religious education which the Son of Mary received as He "increased in wisdom and stature." Edersheim has attractively sketched the normal progress of a Jewish child of the period in sacred study. The weakness of our English system has been that we have separated (at least in modern times) the study of "Divinity" from Worship;

the knowledge of religion from its practice. The Israelite made no such mistake. The home-life was religious, and the children shared it. "Long before he could go to school, or even synagogue, the private and united prayers and the domestic rites, whether of the weekly Sabbath or of festive seasons, would indelibly impress themselves upon his mind."[1] The child would help to light the candles at the mid-winter festival held in honour of the restoration of the Temple services by Judas Maccabeus; in the spring came the merry time of the Feast of Purim; and later the Passover, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles, with the "leafy booths" so dear to children. Soon he would learn the Scriptures in their bearing upon his religious acts—psalms, prayers, passages from Hebrew story or prophecy. When he went to school the Bible was his text book from the age of five to ten; from ten to fifteen the *Mishnah*. That the child Jesus had profited in these studies is shown by the "astonishment" of the rabbis at His "understanding and answers" at the age of twelve. And we who read the utterances of His manhood can mark His familiarity with the sacred text, of which He reverenced every iota and syllable.

We find in the preaching of Jesus references to the Creation story, as expressing the divine intention of holy marriage; to Noah, Abra-

[1] *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*: Edersheim.

ham, Isaac, Jacob ; to the Mosaic legislation ; to the serpent of brass, and the food which sustained the pilgrims ; to David and Solomon ; to Isaiah, Jonah, Elijah. Deuteronomy was in His mind in the hour of His temptation ; the Psalms were on His lips in the hour of death.

Our Lord's example must surely determine the preacher's use of the Old Testament : " the disciple must be as his Master and the servant as his Lord." We may recall the wise counsel of a great exegetist of the Old Testament, George Adam Smith : " For us its supreme sanction is that which it received from Christ Himself. It was the Bible of His education and the Bible of His ministry. He took for granted its fundamental doctrines about creation, about man, and about righteousness. . . . He accepted its history as a preparation for Himself. . . . He drew from it many of the examples and most of the categories of His Gospel. . . . But above all He fed His soul with its contents, and in the great crises of His life sustained Himself upon it as upon the living and sovereign word of God." [1]

It is necessary for the preacher to-day to get down to first principles and to discover afresh not only *what* the Scriptures are, which Jesus used, but *how* He used them. The former

[1] *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament*: G. A. Smith.

question has been studied in the light of archaeology, ethnology, anthropology, philology, and kindred lines of research. The result has been to render obsolete the form, if not the substance, of some of the best preaching of the past age. Frederic Robertson's sermons have a wonderful vitality ; to thousands they made the Old Testament a living book. But note his comment on Genesis xlix, "the blessing of Jacob" : "This chapter contains Jacob's predictions of the destinies of his descendants. Jacob's sagacity was sufficient to discern the germs of character already shown in his sons." There is no hint that the utterance of the dying patriarch may have been amplified or modified by the settlement of the tribes in Canaan.

So with Canon Liddon's sermons on the Old Testament. The reader feels that the circle of ideas within which that great preacher moves is not ours—there seems to be something artificial and unconvincing in "the Disobedient Prophet" or "the Virtue of Elisha's bones."

This is not to disparage the great Victorians ; but nothing ages more quickly than the sermon, which is effective in proportion as it reflects and guides current modes of thought. Each generation has to face its own problems—to think out afresh the Faith and its application.

The people who hear sermons have a vague

idea of the trend of modern criticism ; many distrust it ; few have the opportunity or the desire to study it. But all are more or less affected by the new atmosphere. They observe, so to speak, a change in the theological barometer. We must not ignore this change, while remembering that our business in the pulpit is *preaching*—not the discussing of debatable questions. The people want the *results* of study, not the process ; therefore you must to a great extent think and study for them ; your "study" is the place for the one, your pulpit for the other. Therefore sift and weigh and test with rigorous honesty what you are going to say on Sunday ; when you mount the pulpit let your message be positive, not negative—a real contribution to your people's understanding of the Scriptures.

The "later criticism" will redress the balance of the old. It will be constructive rather than destructive. Professor Eric Peet has recently written,[1] "Never must we lose sight of the axiom that the most probable reason for the existence of a story . . . is that the thing actually happened."

And Dr. Nairne says,[2] "The later criticism is even now too little known. It is a theological criticism, nor merely literary or historical. And a testimony to its truth is this : it restores authority and splendour to the Old Testament."

[1] *Egypt and the Old Testament*, p. 20.

[2] *Every Man's Story of the Old Testament*, p. 294.

2. We may ask *how* Jesus used the Old Testament?

First: Jesus moved among the Scriptures as a Son in His Father's house. The great library and portrait gallery belonged to His Father; it was therefore infinitely sacred and venerable. Everything in it was precious. But all parts were not of equal value. It was to Him an epitome of human history: poetry, legend, allegory, law, politics, art, travels, biography—all were comprised in its pages. It was far more than literature; it was the record of the gradual unfolding of the divine purpose for man, and the unveiling of the character of God. The supreme revelation that it contained was that Jehovah was *One*, the Personal Object of religion, the high and lofty One Who inhabiteth eternity. And His character was holiness. It was this that awakened conscience and inspired the hope of moral progress. And lest men should despair, crushed by the sense of sin and failure, these Scriptures declared the lovingkindness of Jehovah, His patience, His forgiving love.

Secondly: Jesus claimed authority to enrich and amplify the message which God gave to Israel. The unity, the holiness, the love of Jehovah — all received from Him a deeper significance. External commandments became an inward law; the local and temporary was discriminated from what was eternal and abiding. He claimed to be Himself the fulfilment

of the Old Covenant ; " the Scriptures," said He, " testify of Me."

Thirdly : thus loving, venerating, interpreting, and as it were *owning* the Scriptures, He could and did criticize them freely. Without argument He abrogated not merely the mass of commentary and tradition which encumbered it in His day, He criticized the sacred text itself. The Mosaic law as to divorce, the observance of the Sabbath, clean and unclean meats, and much of the old ceremonial He discarded. He preached a higher morality, a deeper purity, a more rigorous asceticism. His aim is not to suppress the self but to spiritualize it ; to set man free—for service.

II. APPLICATION

1. If we follow the Master's method, reverent boldness will mark our handling of the Old Testament in preaching. We shall view the Old Testament in the light of the New. " The New Testament lies hid in the Old ; the Old lies open in the New." It is not for nothing that God in His Providence has preserved these ancient writings. They are not for us, as for the antiquary, a fascinating and unique collection of ancient myth and folk-lore : " whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."

2. If we are to preach and teach boldly we must be sure of our facts. If we have come to conclusions which differ from the ideas in which our people have been brought up, we shall try to show how fresh light on old truths *illuminates* them. This was the method of Jesus : " He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life."

3. But our reverent boldness must be the fruit of reverent study. We are often told that " ignorance " rather than " positive infidelity " is the enemy. This has its application to the pulpit as well as the pew. Good books are dear, but there are libraries [1] accessible to the clergy. And every student could and should possess a few good books on the Old Testament ; e.g. Driver's *Introduction to the O.T.* ; Robertson Smith's *Prophets of Israel* ; Westphal's *The Law and the Prophets* ; G. A. Smith's *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the O.T.* Scholarly and useful little books are Canon Moberly's *Old Testament in Modern Light* and Dr. Nairne's *Every Man's Story of the Old Testament.*

4. We must use the Old Testament as Christ used it ; hence the corollary that we must never use it as Christ would not have used it. We must look at the Old Testament through His eyes. When any-

[1] e.g. the Sacred Study library at Hereford, the Dr. Bray libraries, the Church House library.

thing in it conflicts with Christ's utterance, it is Christ Who is our final authority. For example a vindictive, capricious, or unjust Deity is not the God whom Christ revealed, nor whom a Christian should worship.

5. The fact of sin and the consciousness of sin are writ large in the Old Testament: and Jesus assumed the fact, ratified it, and declared it to be His mission to forgive it. He did not ignore the heinousness of the sins which He forgave. We should preach, as He did, as the fundamental truth about God's character, His love and tenderness and mercy; and, as a consequence, the ruinous betrayal and ingratitude which is involved in sin.

6. A deep sense of sin is historically connected with the ideas of redemption, propitiation, atonement. These ideas, sometimes in a crude form, permeate the Old Testament. Jesus purified them and deepened their meaning; He also perpetuated their permanent elements in word and act. At the institution of the Eucharist He undoubtedly spoke of His Blood being shed "for the remission of sins." If, as Plato taught, "sin and doom are rivetted together," then punishment is sin's *desert*. (The idea of punishment—as distinct from "reformation"—is displeasing to the popular taste, though accepted without question in the great public schools.) There is, in

C. G. Webb's phrase, a "permanent element in propitiation"; and a real theology must find a place for a real Atonement: "the wondrous Cross" is wondrous because of its atoning power.

7. The preacher will avoid the ultra-rationalism of the last century; he will deny less, he will believe more. He will welcome the declaration of Jesus: "they wrote of Me"; "they testify of Me." Convinced of the "mighty works" of Jesus in the Gospels, he will not eliminate from the Old Testament all that bears witness to Him. Yet there are honest thinkers in whose minds some of our Lord's references to the Old Testament raise serious questions: questions which should be faced frankly and reverently. For my own part I do not believe (for example) that the Jews of our Lord's time thought that David wrote the whole Psalter (including the psalms which were obviously composed for Temple worship!) Nor do I feel at all confident that they thought of taking literally the imaginative poem of "Jonah." Popular modes of speech which are known both by speaker and hearer to be popular and not scientific raise no moral difficulty—they imply neither ignorance nor deception. Can we not trust our Lord to have understood the psychology and mental status of His fellow countrymen better than we can reconstruct them?

III. QUESTIONS

1. Do we follow our Lord's method in using the Old Testament to illustrate our teaching?

2. Do we realize that the acquaintance (vague as it often is) which our people have with the Old Testament provides us with points of contact which help to arouse interest?

3. Do we read and re-read the English Bible, including the Apocrypha, as "a well of English undefiled"? Do we commit to memory some of its noblest utterances? If we did so, there would be more dignity and power in the pulpit.

4. Can we recover the art of expository preaching—taking a subject or a period and illustrating it with adequate knowledge?

5. Do we use the Old Testament, and especially the Psalter, as our Lord used them, in hours of devotion or temptation? If the Old Testament means much to us it will mean something to our people. A great preacher has said, "Study God's Word diligently for your own edification; and then it will be impossible for you to speak of it to others without a glow passing into your words which will betray the delight with which it has inspired yourself."

IV. PRAYER

BLESSED Lord, Who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning;

Grant that we may in such wise read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of Thy holy Word we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life which Thou hast given us in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

STUDY IX

PREACHING BY EXAMPLE

I. The Consecrated Life

THE human life of Jesus on earth was a dedicated life, a consecrated life. "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me": and at the end "I have glorified Thee upon the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." And because His preaching was the fruit of a consecrated life "His word was with power."

Our concluding study, therefore, will be the relation of preaching to life and life to preaching; how to commend our message to men by our example. When S. Paul was giving counsel to Timothy (who was taking charge of the Church at Ephesus) he exhorted him to be "an example"—a type or pattern—"to the faithful in word, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity." And if Timothy, or any other minister, was to set an example to the flock, he must mould his own life on the Great Exemplar. "Be ye followers of me" S. Paul was able to say, but only because he could add "even as I also am of Christ."

1. It is worthy of our meditation that it was

precisely those who knew Jesus most intimately in His daily walk and conversation who came to believe in Him and His message wholeheartedly and to trust Him utterly. The force of His example made His teaching irresistible. At each moment, and at each crisis as it came, they could not help noting His vivid consciousness of the nearness and reality of the spiritual world ; prayer and communion with the Father were the breath of His life and the mainstay of His activity.

2. This inwardness of Jesus, this absorbedness in God, did not make Him remote from the common life and interests of men. It constantly flowed forth in ministering love and sympathy with suffering and sorrow. He loved all because He understood all, and He understood because He loved them. So it was with the hungry multitude near to fainting by the way ; with the widowed mother at Nain ; with Mary and Martha at Bethany ; with Thomas in his doubt, and Peter in his fall ; with the disappointed fishermen on the lake ; with His Mother at the cross.

3. They would come to know His constancy and steadfastness of purpose, as of One Who saw His goal and never swerved from it. "His face was set" towards Jerusalem, "and as they followed they were afraid." His entire self-forgetfulness, self-sacrifice that had no limit, these compelled the admiration and won the love of His friends.

4. His personal holiness amazed them. Not only His enemies, but those who were daily and hourly in contact with Him, could "find no fault in Him." And this stainless purity was positive rather than negative—it was not only sinlessness but holiness such as they had not dreamed of. He could not only touch pitch without being defiled; His touch turned sinners into saints and common clay into vessels of gold and silver.

5. He became master of their affections, their mind and conscience; all that was best in them responded to Him and confessed Him Lord. Yet mastership itself acquired a new and unsuspected meaning in His school. That He was their Master was undoubted; His authority they could not question. "Ye call Me Master and Lord," said He, "and so I am." Yet He showed them by His example that the proof and credentials of mastership are rooted in humility and service. "I am among you as he that serveth."

In such ways as these Jesus revealed His character and set an example to His followers and disciples. The way of life of the Christian is *Imitatio Christi*. What special reference has this to the work of preaching? The answer surely is that in no other vocation does the personal character of the agent tell so weightily and inevitably. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness,

goodness, faith, meekness, self-control "—the very portrait of Jesus Himself. And it is true of His ministers that "By their fruits ye shall know them." How can people believe in these things and desire them as a consequence of our preaching unless they see them in the daily life of the preacher? If we become, in the drudgery of daily life, discontented, harsh, arrogant, envious, formal, desultory, worldly, how shall we preach to others the joy and peace in believing? The antidote to the sins which most easily beset the priest is meditation on the example of our Lord—His intimate communion with the Father, His ministering love, His steadfastness, His holiness, His life of service.

Christ has "left us an example that ye should follow His steps"—and this duty, which is laid on all, has peculiar urgency to those who are called to lead others. How *can* we follow this tremendous Leader, Who mounts up with wings as an eagle, Who runs and is not weary, Who walks and faints not? By "waiting on the Lord": by "growing up into Him in all things Who is the Head, even Christ": by remembering the golden saying of Martensen—"*Incorporation into Christ precedes the imitation of Christ.*" In other words, the priest cannot live *as* Christ lived among men, unless he lives *in Christ*—drawing nourishment and strength from Him. Christ must be to him an example, but more

than an example ; a friend, but more than a friend : He must be spiritual food and sustenance. The preacher will then be, as in bold phrase the Fathers expressed it, THEOPHOROS, a Christ-bearer ; he will go from the altar to the pulpit and from the pulpit to the parish, bearing God within him. He will be, as it were, a Sacrament to his people ; and his example will be to them "an extension of the Incarnation."

If he comes, through years rich in devout experience, a little nearer to the apostolic ideal, "I live ; yet not I ; Christ liveth in me," he will move in an environment of good and gracious influences which emanate from Him Who is the Light of the World.

Thus "the incorporation into the mystical body" of Christ leads to the "good works which He has prepared for us to walk in" :[1] the imitation of Christ follows the incorporation into Christ. For it is a psychological law that we assimilate ourselves to the thoughts and emotions among which we habitually live and move and have our being, as the ermine matches itself to the colour of the snow, or the thrush to the colour of the woods. Further, we naturally imitate those qualities and persons whom we admire and love ; thus we become like what we imitate. By loving and imitating the qualities that are Christlike the likeness grows. "Beholding as in a mirror the glory

[1] See the Thanksgiving in the Communion Service.

of the Lord we are changed into the same image."

The preacher's example, which should ideally be nothing less than a life openly lived in communion with Christ, will give weight and authority to the spoken word. It is because we are for the most part so far from reminding people of Christ that many distrust or ignore the pulpit. If they thought that we were *really like Christ* the common people would hear us gladly. Our business therefore is to be much with Him ; to let His image be formed in us : to share, and then inevitably to exhibit, His sincerity, self-forgetfulness, sympathy, self-sacrifice, and mystical union with the Father.

II. APPLICATION

1. The preaching of Jesus was the expression of His character. His words interpret God to us because He was, in the phrase of Athanasius, "the Ray of the Divine glory," the expression of the Divine Personality.

The preacher must put his own personality into his preaching. His message must be his own ; it must take the form which his individuality creates ; that is why a real sermon cannot be borrowed even from the best authors. Deep and wide reading gathers the materials ; but upon these the selective instinct of the preacher must work to create the new from the old.

2. Great preachers have usually been men of striking and original personality. Therefore they are and must be few and far between. But good preaching demands what is commoner but more important, namely a good personality. Remember that your personality is your own and different from that of any other man living. It was one of Creighton's aphorisms that "we help other people most not by being like them but by being unlike them." You have your personal and individual contribution to make to the world's good. In "the differences of ministration" when inspired by "the same Lord" lies your power and your opportunity.

3. Your preaching is commended or discounted by the kind of life you live among your people. The most eloquent preaching will fail if accompanied by a self-indulgent life.

4. When you "settle down" in a parish, your habits, your recreations, your domestic affairs, your attention (or inattention) to the studies proper to your calling, your disposition, your scale of expenditure, all will become known and will be discussed by your people. The stricter your personal standard is, the more convincing will be your preaching.

5. A dissatisfied or disappointed or discontented man cannot be a herald of good news to others. "The fruit of the Spirit is joy." If we have a true vocation—and did

we not say, at the most solemn moment of our life, that we believed we were *called* to our office and ministry?[1]—then what we most love to do is our daily occupation. Many men have their best hours outside of and apart from their work. This is usually the case with the hand-worker in the mill or factory, with the banker, the agent, the lawyer. The priest, like the artist or musician, should find delight *in* his work. A gay spirit, a royal courage, a devoted life—these make an inspired preacher.

III. QUESTIONS

1. Do you realize that the strength of the parochial system ought to show itself in the fact that there is a resident priest in every parish? and that he is set there to be an example of what the Christian life can be?

2. Are you "an example of the believers in speech, manner of life, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity"?[2]

3. Do you diffuse among men by your example the influence of Him whose commissioned minister you are?

4. Could you say to your people, as S. Paul said, "be ye imitators of me even as I also am of Christ"? Would your people describe you as "a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith"? If not, do you find, on self-

[1] See Ordination Service. [2] 1 Tim. iv. 12.

examination, what is hindering your influence for good?

5. Do you share, as Jesus did, the common joys and sorrows of the people? Do you know them personally, love them in spite of and because of their faults, and lead them to the Shepherd of their souls?

IV. PRAYER

ALMIGHTY God, Who of Thy tender love towards mankind hast sent Thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ to take upon Him our flesh and to suffer death upon the Cross that all mankind should follow the example of His great humility; Mercifully grant that we may both follow the example of His patience and also may be partakers of His Resurrection; through the same Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

APPENDIX

A PREACHER AT PRAYER

A Prayer of Jeremy Taylor

LORD, let me be ever courteous, and easy to be entreated : never let me fall into a peevish or contentious spirit, but follow peace with all men : offering forgiveness, inviting them by courtesies : ready to confess my own errors, apt to make amends, and desirous to be reconciled. Let no sickness or cross accident, no employment or weariness, make me angry, or ungentle and discontented, or unthankful : but in all things make me like unto the holy Jesus.

Give me the spirit of a Christian, charitable, humble, merciful and meek, useful and liberal : angry at nothing but my own sins, and grieving for the sins of others : that while my passion obeys my reason, and my reason is religious, and my religion is pure and undefiled, managed with humility and adorned with charity, I may dwell in Thy love, and be Thy son and servant for ever, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Another of the same.

O ETERNAL God, Who hast created me to do the work of God after the manner of men, and to serve Thee in this generation and according to my capacities : give me Thy grace that I may be a prudent spender of my time, so as I may best prevent or resist all temptation, and be profitable to the Christian commonwealth ; and by discharging all my duty may glorify Thy Name. Take from me all slothfulness and give me a diligent and an active spirit, that I may fill up all the spaces of my time with actions of religion and charity : improving my talent entrusted to me by Thee my Lord, that I may enter into the joy of the Lord, to partake of Thy eternal felicities, even for Thy mercy's sake. Amen.

A PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

(*By the same.*)

I BLESS and praise Thy Name, O eternal Father, most merciful God, that Thou hast vouchsafed to admit me to a participation of these dreadful and desirable mysteries. Unworthy though I am, yet Thy love never fails : and though I too often have repented of my repentances and fallen back into sin, yet Thou never repentest of Thy lovingkindnesses : be pleased therefore now, in this day of mercy, when Thou openest the treasures of heaven,

and rainest manna upon our souls to refresh them when they are weary, of Thy infinite goodness to grant that this Holy Communion may not be to me unto judgement and condemnation ; but it may be sweetness to my soul, health and safety in every temptation, joy and peace in every trouble, light and strength in every word and work, comfort and defence in the hour of my death against all the oppositions of the spirits of darkness : and grant that no unclean thing may be in me who have received Thee into my heart and soul. Amen.

A Prayer for our Country

(*By the same.*)

Give to all merchants faithfulness and truth, to the labouring husbandman health and fair seasons of the year, and reward his toil with the dew of heaven and the blessings of the earth : to all artisans give diligence in their callings and a blessing on their labours and on their families : to old men piety and perfect repentance, a liberal heart and an open hand, great religion and desires after heaven. To young men give sobriety and chastity, health and usefulness, and early piety and a persevering duty ; to us all pardon and holiness and life eternal, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

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